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A Journal of Germanic Studies

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New German Review Volume 15/16, 1999—2001

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Editors' Note

Times of change often bring about times of confusion. The realm of academic publishing is no exception to this rule. Since Yvonne Ivory received her Ph.D. and accepted a teaching job at San Diego State University, we took over the editorial responsibilities for the New German Review. First of all we congratulate for her latest accomplishments, and secondly we thank her for making the transition for the editorial board as smooth as possible.

Furthermore, it was our fortune that we were given the opportunity to receive help from and work with a group of very conscientious and able individuals. We would therefore like to take a moment to thank in particular: Irma A. Tirado at the Associated Students UCLA for her incredible patience with our numerous questions and requests, and Karen K. Wickman, Customer Service Supervisor at UCLA DocuWorX, for her expertise.

It is our hope that we will succeed in continuing to provide you with interesting and informative articles.

*Christina Wegel
Kryztof Urban*

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Preface, Vorwort, Vorrede: Jean Paul and E. T. A. Hoffmann

Francis Paul Greene

A War of Words

Uncannily enough, E. T. A. Hoffmann predates himself. The role into which he has been cast of a sometimes threatening, sometimes benevolent double has a history just slightly longer than that of Hoffmann's works themselves. Its birth predates his authorial *début* by moments, or, to make use of a more appropriate measure, a few pages. His strange figure comes to us as an uncanny pre-birth, a kind of placenta temporally out of joint. Before any singular image of Hoffmann qua author can be established, he is cast in the role of the double, doubled at the point of origin. What I am referring to here is the preface to Hoffmann's first published work, his *Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier*, written, as its subtitle tells us, by Jean Paul Friedrich Richter.

This seemingly innocuous amalgam of satirical bravado, reserved appreciation and partially veiled polemic sets the tone for a continuing tradition which both read and continues to read Hoffmann as an uncanny threat - a tradition which first ruefully acknowledges a certain liking for Hoffmann only to dismiss him in the end for his lack of restraint. Hoffmann is admirable but excessive. He may hit his mark, but in doing so he goes beyond the bounds of propriety. In a word, Hoffmann displays a quality of 'too-muchness' which this tradition must reject in order to preserve a coherent image of self.

For Jean Paul, this image is that of the author qua signatory of a definitive literary oeuvre. What Jean Paul finds threatening in Hoffmann is the very similarity not only of their respective literary *Maniers*, but also of the subversive potential of which each makes use in the signature of the author.¹ Jean Paul's literary signature resembles a palimpsest, one overwritten with his pseudonyms and his literary *Doppelgänger* (including that of editor and not author of some of his works) which nevertheless retains its appellative force. What Jean Paul found so unique in his own writing was not the name-giving, patronymic power of his signature as such, but rather his unmistakable style (visible behind the multiple signature), the simultaneous density and lightness of his works, his acerbic and indomitable wit. Despite his efforts to undermine traditional conceptions of the literary signatory qua Olympian genius (Goethe), Jean Paul exhibits in his preface to Hoffmann's *Fantasiestücke* a lingering attachment to such conceptions inasmuch as he goes on the defensive to protect his own, however enigmatically illegible, signature.²

When in 1813 Hoffmann signed a contract with his Bamberg friend, confidant and soon to be publisher Karl Friedrich Kunz to publish the five short pieces which would become the first part of his *Fantasiestücke*, Kunz thought it best to seek out some well known figure to write a preface for the book (Klessmann 237). After all, Hoffmann was, at the time, a complete unknown. His attempts to make a name for himself in various fields had all lead to failure. Before 1814 Hoffmann had only been known either as a lawyer who had lost his job because of Napoleon's usurpation of the Prussian state, a theatrical music director who lost his job in Bamberg because of infighting and monetary mismanagement or a private music teacher whose predilection for one of his underage women students had kept his engagements at a minimum. What hope could such a nobody have on the then star-studded literary scene? Kunz, a wine merchant making his *début* as a publisher, knew well the value of an appellation and turned to his friend Jean Paul for help.

From the beginning, Hoffmann was against the idea. To him, such literary props functioned either as ill-gotten bills of health (what

he will call *Attestate*) which strove to hide the weaknesses of the work which they preceded or prefatory apologies (what he will call *Brandbriefe*)-statements of loss or hardship with which the fledgling author could hope to win appreciation through the pity of his audience. In response to Kunz' suggestion that he find a well known figure to write a preface for the *Fantasiestücke*, Hoffmann wrote back the following:

Alle Vorreden sind mir, stehen sie nicht als *Prolegomena* zu einem wissenschaftlichen Werke, in den Tod zuwider, am mehrsten aber solche, womit bekannte Schriftsteller die Werke unbekannter wie mit einem Attestate versehen und ausstatten - Diese Vorreden sind gleichsam die Brandbriefe, mit denen in der Hand die jungen Schriftsteller um Beifall bitteln.

(Müller and Schnapp 400)

Since Hoffmann's collected pieces were more concerned with imagination (*Fantasiestücke*) than with science (*Wissenschaft*), a *Vorrede* was out of the question. He was neither young—in 1813 Hoffmann was already 37—nor wont to search for public approval, no matter how advantageous or necessary it might have proven. Hoffmann did, however, see the practical benefits to be had by propping up his then unknown name with that of an established author. After all, publishing was an expensive business—and the economic malaise imposed by Napoleonic occupation made any such endeavor all the more risky. In the same letter, Hoffmann continues:

Finden Sie [Kunz] als Verleger, Ihres bessern Nutzens wegen, es aber geraten, meinem Werklein ein solches Attestat vorsetzen zu lassen, so schreiben Sie immerhin an Ihren Freund Jean Paul, vielleicht ist er in der Laune, ein launiges *Vorwort* hinzuwerfen, das doch *meinem* Vorworte (ich meine den Callott [sic!]) vorgesetzt werden könnte. (Müller and Schnapp 400)

If Jean Paul was in the mood (*Laune*), perhaps he could dash off (*hinwerfen*) a word or two (*Vorwort*) in his eminently witty, tongue in

cheek (*launigt*) style, which would be placed before Hoffmann's own prefatory, invocational words. Of primary importance to Hoffmann's initial objection to a traditional preface to his work is the field of semantic play which stretches between the terms *Vorwort* and *Vorrede*.

Neither *Vorwort* nor *Vorrede* can be completely subsumed into their usual English counterparts of foreword, introduction, preface or prolegomena. Although exhibiting temporal, structural and performative similarities with each other, the functions of *Vorwort* and *Vorrede* are at constant odds. Hoffmann's preference between the two is clear: *Vorwort*: *proverbium*—in legal terms (in which Hoffmann was well versed) a promise, engagement, arrangement or agreement but also a condition, excuse or explanation; in questions of etiquette, the first word (given in deference to social station); in grammatical terms a prefix or pronoun; in literary terms a recommendation, a prologue or a preface. (Grimm 1960)

The *Vorwort* establishes a contract or arrangement between its text and the text it precedes. It promises something in that which follows—a promise which may be kept or broken. It engages not the reader but the ‘main text’—the work it precedes or in this case Hoffmann’s unassuming *Werklein*. It is based upon conditions; it sets up provisional boundaries; it explains, makes excuses—it sets the stage, placing the text it precedes in a context. If it is not on equal footing with the work—engaging it as a peer, it displays deference, respect, or even pity. It has little or no meaning of its own—left on its own a fragment, a few letters without reference or sense. A *Vorwort* is something dashed down in haste—it is, after all, a simple *Vorwort* and not a *Vorsatz* (resolve, intent—malicious or otherwise), let alone a discursive and lengthy *Vorrede*.

Although the two words can be and were, at the time, used almost synonymously, for Hoffmann the difference between the two is abyssal. Take for instance the semantic resonance of the term *Vorrede*: *prefatio, prologus*—in legal terms, that which was said before (before an action or another utterance). (Grimm 1404) A *Vorrede* could have been a promise - one, however, already made, an event in the past and not a performative act in the present. A *Vorrede* could have been a threat. Recontextualized into the present, it can be an

introduction to a speech (*proloquium*); in the liturgical sense, *praefatio*; in the conversational sense an interruption, *ado* (*mal endlich ohne Vorrede, bitte*). *Vorreden* have addressees—they address themselves usually *an den Leser* or *sehr geehrte Damen und Herren* and not to the work in question. By short circuiting the relationship between reader and work, *Vorreden* perform a kind of preemptive interruption before the work can even get started.

They take the floor, clear their throats and begin their discursive meanderings before discussion can begin. Filibusters, unnecessary introductions, tests of patience—for this very reason most *Vorreden* go unread. It is always more rewarding to skip to the heart of the matter, to get down to business and avoid all the prefatory ado. Those, however, who adhere to the rules of order and give the *Vorredner* his due can soon fall prey to his trap. They can become diverted, bored, unduly influenced by his polemic, his prescriptive if not perspicacious words concerning the text which follows. In a word, *Vorreden* open a gap, a rift between themselves and the texts they precede. In the guise of a ‘few prefatory remarks’, when they take the floor they don’t give it back. They usurp the signatory power of the author they introduce. They create a break or a barrier which the reader may never be able to cross.

Despite Hoffmann’s preferences and despite all appearances, what Jean Paul returns to Kunz is, by title and by function, a *Vorrede* and not a *Vorwort*. Title aside, at first glance Jean Paul’s preface could be seen to fit well under the rubric of *Vorwort*. His text is short, not overly loquacious. It briefly and efficiently serves its introductory purpose, announcing the name of the as of yet unknown author, Hoffmann. It seems to address the work (literally under the guise of a literary review) and not the reader. Its signatory is placed on an at least equal footing with, if not slightly beneath, the ‘main’ author, Hoffmann.³

Yet the function of Jean Paul’s preface is to undermine the reader’s confidence in the signatory of the text which follows. In the guise of praise, it derides. Despite its brevity, its thicket-like density would test the patience of the most avid of readers. What Jean Paul initiates in his *Vorrede* is an all too serious game of names. Hoffmann,

whose name appears nowhere on the original frontispiece, must be shown by Jean Paul for what he is (or at least for what he is not). In order to establish the difference between Jean Paul and the no-name author whose work he prefaces, Hoffmann must be given a name, his own name—one that differs from Jean Paul's enigmatic palimpsest and is easily legible. The very similarities in style and subject matter which exist between Hoffmann and Jean Paul pose a threat to the latter's *Titan-ic* signature (one which, because of its redundancy, its repetitions, could seemingly never be sunk). It is in response to this threat, in response to Hoffmann's uncanny similarity to Jean Paul (seemingly pre-dating, prefacing the very author who would preface him) that Jean Paul constructs his *Vorrede*.

Jean Paul's initial response to Kunz' request for a preface was less than enthusiastic. After having read the manuscript for both projected parts of the *Fantasiestücke*, Jean Paul however wrote back to Kunz,

Ich schreibe die Vorrede, und hoffentlich eine recht gute und wahre! Wie konnte ich mir einbilden, daß das Buch ein so überaus vortreffliches wäre; ich gratuliere Ihnen [Kunz] zu dem gefundenem Schatze.
(quoted in Hoffmann 622)

Whether Jean Paul met his goal of writing a *Vorrede* both good and true remains to be seen. His enthusiasm, however—and who can ever profess to be truly enthusiastic when someone else, especially a friend, comes across a *gefunder Schatz*—will take on an hysterical tone after an investigation of what came out of it, namely his *Vorrede*.

Last Words

A *Vorrede* can upset the order of things when its prefatory function becomes a conclusion, when the first words between two covers become the last words, the only words a reader bothers to read. If a *Vorrede* lives up to its potential, it will throw the reader off the track, it will delay the reader's entrance to the work to a point at which he or she gives up. In this function, as mentioned above, the

Vorrede always has an addressee. Although Jean Paul seems to address his text to Hoffmann (by providing him with a review before the work even gets started), or even to Kunz, its real *Anschrift* reads *an den Leser*. Although delivered to Kunz and forwarded to Hoffmann for his (begrudging) approval, Jean Paul's preface flies the coop and arrives somewhere else. With Lacanian certitude this letter eventually finds its way to its proper destination, namely the potential reader of the newly published Hoffmann.⁴ Indeed what Jean Paul begins here with his preemptive strike is a war of letters, an epistolary conflict which will accompany Hoffmann and his works throughout the history of their reception.

If Jean Paul's *Vorrede* takes on an epistolary form, he, like all good letter writers, opens by apologizing for not having written in so long. Under the conceit of a review written 9 years after publication of the *Fantasiestücke* (dated 1823 instead of 1814), Jean Paul (under the pseudonym of *Frip*) simultaneously apologizes for and justifies the delay. If the reader has already read the *Fantasiestücke*, no apology is necessary, writes *Frip*, the pleasure of having read them far outweighing the benefit to be had from any review, timely or otherwise. If the reader has not yet read the *Fantasiestücke*, *Frip*'s review is the "poste restante", the delayed (dead) letter which, once found, puts everything in its place. The "Verzugzinsen" of this dead letter are the time lost and regret one must feel at having missed nine years of potential enjoyment of Hoffmann's text.

So far, so good. Up to this point, Jean Paul seems wholly positive about the work he is (posthumously) prefacing. Yet after having established the status of the *Vorrede* as a letter and placing himself in correspondence with the reader, Jean Paul begins to deface the work he had just portrayed in such a positive light. Instead of beginning his attack *ad hominem*, Jean Paul levies his first blow rather at the title of the text in question. "Bestimmter würde er *Kunstnovellen* heißen; denn Callots Maler- oder vielmehr Dicht-Manier herrscht weder mit ihren Fehlern noch, einige Stellen ausgenommen, mit ihren Größen im Buche." (Hoffmann 56) Already *Frip*/ Jean Paul takes exception (*Ausnahme*) to Hoffmann's book, changing its name and mentioning

its faults (*Fehler*), by proximity to Callot and, as Freud would argue, preservation through negation, before its positive aspects (*Größen*).

Indeed the question of size or at least proportion is paramount to the interruptive function of Jean Paul's letter to the reader. In his letter to Kunz, Hoffmann already acknowledges that size does matter in this game of appellation ("Finden Sie [Kunz] [...] es aber geraten, meinem *Werklein* ein solches Attestat vorsetzen zu lassen, so schreiben Sie immerhin an Ihren Freund Jean Paul."). If there were indeed any similarity between Hoffmann and Callot, so Jean Paul, it would be in their common virtuosity in the roles of *Zerrbildner*: caricaturists, parodists, artists of distortion. Both Hoffmann and Callot show things not as they are but through a kind of distortive lens. They show things out of proportion—small things become magnified and large things (*Größen*) are made small. They disrupt a seemingly natural order. They construct anagrams (*Anagrammatiker der Natur*), making of truth something arbitrary and contingent.

With his left handed compliments (*Lob anderer Gattung*), Jean Paul builds for this artist of distortion a well suited atelier. Instead of placing Hoffmann at a writer's desk or, as he would Callot, before a model or sketch-book, Jean Paul locks him away in a dark chamber, "in seiner dunklen Kammer (camera obscura)" (Hoffmann 56). There he creates images, not texts. Onto his chamber walls Hoffmann projects the grotesque products of the *Zerrbildner*'s dual process of reduction and magnification. He first reduces those who merely flirt (*kokettieren*) with or affect affection for the arts (*Kunstliebeleien*) to their appropriate size. They are made into "Kleister- und Essigaale der Kunst" (57), strange tiny organisms which appear as if out of nowhere if something of use is left out for too long. *Kleister, Essig* - appropriately a *Klebstoff* and a *Säure* - Jean Paul is, after all, most concerned with questions of attachment and difference here. In his camera obscura, Hoffmann then magnifies these little creatures, projecting their grotesque images and their strange, convulsive movements on the wall.

According to Jean Paul, however, all of this is done in good faith, without intent to deceive or disgust. The images are grotesque of their own right; Hoffmann's uncanny process of reduction and

magnification simply brings them into view. His focus is good (“der Umriß ist scharf”), the color lifelike (“die Farben sind warm”) and the whole show resonant with a certain freedom and veracity (“und das Ganze voll Seele und Freiheit”) (Hoffmann 57). Hoffmann’s projections are ‘true to life’. They show things the way they are, making visible to all the grotesque appearance of parasitic *Phillister*.

If Jean Paul’s metaphors seem mixed, if his *Lob anderer Gattung* seems hard to follow, it is because he is not sure if the walls of this camera obscura will hold. He is not sure exactly how to categorize this strange figure with his *Kleister- und Essigaale*. Hoffmann is like Callot but different; he is an artist and an alchemist, a *Zerrbildner* and a realist. In the end, Jean Paul decides to move Hoffmann from the camera obscura into a more well lit, and presumably more secure, environment. To this end, Hoffmann is taken out of the shadows and brought into the examination room. If his works seem confusing, so Jean Paul tells us, if his magnification of the microscopic seems cold and manipulative, it is because Hoffmann is suffering under a unique affliction. As diagnosed by Jean Paul, Hoffmann’s case is one of general misanthropy caused by, of all things, an excess of love.

For all of the wonder or shock Hoffmann can elicit with his grotesque projections, Jean Paul (as any good doctor would) advises him to show some restraint. His colors may be true, his focus correct but the love (*Kunstliebe*) that drives him to purify the realm of art of its eel-like parasites can lead to a misanthropy (*Menschenhäß*) that renders art cold and lifeless. Hoffmann’s own patient, that is art, can die on the table while under examination in the camera obscura. Indeed Dr. Hoffmann seems patently unable to heal even himself. A second opinion, namely Jean Paul’s, is necessary to remedy the situation. If Hoffmann’s love of art burns too hot, the flirtatious nature of artistic *Schöntuerei* is too cold. Dr. Jean Paul’s prescription is for moderation—neither too much nor too little, neither too cold (*kokett*) nor too hot (c.f. Hoffmann’s *satyrischer Feuerregen*). Otherwise art can fall victim to parasitic infection (*Kleister- und Essigaale der Kunst*) or catch a nasty cold (“Die durch Kunstliebe einbüßende

Menschenliebe rächt sich stark durch Erkältung der Kunst selber" (Hoffmann 58).

Jean Paul's diagnostic analysis of what ails Hoffmann is, as I have suggested above, an attempt by the former to distinguish himself from the latter (the root of the Greek *diagignoskein* means to distinguish or set apart). The uncanny threat Hoffmann poses for Jean Paul is clear. Hoffmann's work seems to preface that of the author who would preface Hoffmann. Indeed Jean Paul seems forced to repeat this structure when he takes pains to displace any temporal primacy his preface may have enjoyed by writing under the conceit of his "poste restante".

First Words

This temporal displacement of Jean Paul's preface is exacerbated by the lack of a name for his uncanny predecessor double. Jean Paul is quick to take Hoffmann to task for the faulty title of the work in question. He knows there is a problem there, perhaps one having to do with names, but he is not sure how to combat it. His attack indeed misses the mark inasmuch as he focuses on Callot and not the absent, unnamed Hoffmann. Although Callot's name comes before Jean Paul's on the cover of the *Fantasiestücke* ("Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier/ Blätter aus dem Tagebuch eines reisenden Enthusiasten/ Mit einer Vorrede von Jean Paul" (51)), Jean Paul's is the first name completely legible, and indeed at all interesting, to a German reading audience. Because of its strangeness, both Hoffmann and Jean Paul make a point of deciphering this enigmatic signature (Callot) for the reader in their respective prefaces.

What unnerves Jean Paul about the title on the cover is the vertigo it causes, one which seems to end on the name "Jean Paul" - essentially naming him as its author⁵. In a series of imbricated displacements, the title of Hoffmann's work destabilizes any position from which its author (if other than Jean Paul) can be positively identified. In order to put an end to these displacements, Jean Paul must name Hoffmann, he must diagnose him as sick, prescribe a cure and thereby distinguish Hoffmann's signature from his own. He must

name these strange projections, these pieces of fantasy, as a product of Hoffmann the alchemist, Hoffmann the caricaturist, Dr. Hoffmann unable to heal himself. In the end, however, he falls victim to the very displacements he seeks to master, ending up in such a confused state that he cannot even sign his own name.

First displacement: *Fantasiestücke* - term more suitable to a musical score than a literary text. *Fantasieren* - to expand a musical theme, to embellish, to improvise. Jean Paul uncharacteristically translates this designation of performative license into the rigid and well-defined *Kunstnovellen*, a term with both discrete content (*Kunst*) and a genre if not of classical than at least of Italian renaissance provenance (*Novelle*). Second displacement: *in Callots Manier*. Musical pieces in the style of a pen and ink caricaturist, mixed media, synaesthesia - for Jean Paul totally unacceptable because so close to his own beloved and well known *Manier*. As mentioned above, he will praise Callot in his *Vorrede*, but he will do so only to keep him in his place. Callot, so Jean Paul, is an appropriate ideal for the likes of other graphical caricaturists, Hogarth for instance, not for aspiring authors.

These pieces, these fragments (*Stücke*) take the form of collected pages (*Blätter*) - not even a *Werklein*, just pages torn from a diary, a journal (*Tagebuch*), too personal, too contingent to be art. They are also pages from the journal of a vagabond (*eines reisenden*), someone shifty, underway, 'in sufferance' rather than *restante*. This displacement is only heightened when we find out that this vagabond is displaced at his very origin. He is an *Enthusiast*, someone moved to the core, someone sent underway, someone on a mission, following an inspiration, a mere pendant to his own shifting and perhaps capricious desires.

This vertigo of displacement, this parodic imbrication of catechreses proves to be too much for Jean Paul because of its proximity. It hits too close to home. He has to escape, to establish difference. In order to do so, he must change the title, get rid of Callot and force Hoffmann the author out of his darkened chamber. He does this by obscuring his own name - by stepping into the eaves in hopes of luring Hoffmann out on stage. As mentioned above, Jean Paul signs his fictional review with his pseudonym *Frip*. The conceit

of the review places it however in the “Jenaische Allgemeine Literaturzeitung”, a further step toward self-effacement for fans of *Frip* who knew him to be a staple of the “Heidelberger Jahrbücher”.

On the cover we read only Jean Paul’s doubled surname (French? German?) and he signs the *Vorrede* with the slightly abbreviated “Jean Paul Friedr. Richter”. Hoffmann is named near the end of the review. Instead of leaving us with a nameless author, Jean Paul casts himself as the ‘namenloser Rezensent’ who, in following with the established critical fashion, serves as a vehicle of disclosure - transmitting loud and clear the name of the author who, for whatever reason, had remained anonymous.

Nach dem gewöhnlichen kritischen Herkommen, welchem zufolge der namenlose Rezensent den Namen jedes Autors anzugeben hat, der seinen verschwiegen, berichten wir denn, daß der Herr Verfasser *Hoffmann* heißt und Musikdirektor in Dresden ist. (Hoffmann 60)

Jean Paul the tattle-tale, Jean Paul the name-dropper. Since Hoffmann won’t tell us his name, Jean Paul (in the role of the *namenloser Rezensent*) must let the cat out of the bag. He is, after all, only following tradition. Hoffmann seemed to be asking for it, tucked away in his darkened chamber, frightening and enticing us with his grotesque projections.

The nameless reviewer (*Frip*, Jean Paul) takes pains to name all the parties involved (Callot, Hoffmann). He has already passed judgment on the work his letter to the reader is prefacing, all he need do now is to get the names straight. His own name seems clear: “Jean Paul Friedr. Richter”; and for those who cannot read it, his own *Manier* should be signature enough (“Der Manier ihres [der Vorrede] Verfassers ist bekannt genug.” (Hoffmann 61)). Jean Paul’s signature is so powerful, it doesn’t even need to be signed to have its effect. His power is in his *Manier*, and his *Manier* is to pass judgment on others. Indeed we can read his abbreviated signature as bipartite, perhaps better read as “Jean Paul Friedr.” and “Richter”.

Jean Paul takes pains to establish himself as an appropriate judge of Hoffmann's works. His letter to the reader is indeed an attestation—this time of legal and not medical import. It is an appeal, an appellation, an adjudication to establish the rights and responsibilities of those involved. Jean Paul tells us outright just who is not fit to be a *Richter* (popular writers such as Bahrdt, Kranz, Wetzel or Nicolai)⁶. Yet he exhibits a lack of confidence in his own authority which signals that he may have been unable to escape the series displacements begun in the book's title.

After all, what rule of law would need to base its authority on the derision of others? In his uneasiness in a position of such power, Jean Paul will prove that *Titan*-ic signature is more vulnerable than it seemed. The point of impact, the puncture which will sink the titan Jean Paul is indeed written into his very signature. At the end of his *Vorrede*, Jean Paul inserts a period to mark the place where Hoffmann's threat hit home. Missing in his name, at the end of "Friedr.", is the very "ich" which would have allowed him to pronounce himself a worthy judge of the case before him.⁷ Hadn't Napoleon shown only a few years before that self-proclamation of power, auto-coronation is the only true sign of authority?

At the end of his *Vorrede*, at the end of his diversionary attempt to differentiate himself from Hoffmann, Jean Paul is unable to write the two words which would have made his diagnosis, his *Attestat*, his adjudication credible. "Ich Richter" is the lapidary yet necessary proclamation missing from his abbreviated signature which would have (in unabbreviated form) established Jean Paul as a judge over Hoffmann. Indeed, in its abbreviated form it is difficult if not impossible to tell where the "Friedrich" ends and where the "Richter" begins.

Jean Paul had already warned the reader that in the end, prefaces (*Vorreden*) written by the author of a work turn out to be nothing more than self serving, self-reflexive reviews (*Selbstrezensionen*). He promises the reader something else, something objective, written by a third (or fourth) party, something removed, discrete. Despite his resolution, Jean Paul (as *Frip* or even as *Fried-richter*—a peaceful judge, passive, one unwilling to make a stir, to pass judgment) is unable to

come through. He is entangled in web of vertiginous displacement along with both the reader and Hoffmann. His review of Hoffmann ends up as self-review of his inability to escape from the latter's camera obscura, his inability to tear himself away from the uncanny images Hoffmann projects on its darkened walls.

Yet is this continuation of the vertigo with which Hoffmann usurps the power of the author's signature a sign that Jean Paul was unable to fulfill his promise to Kunz of providing a "recht gute und wahre" *Vorrede* to Hoffmann's unassuming *Werklein*? Faced with Jean Paul's defaced signature, the question is raised as to how well this preface performs its function. Did Jean Paul's *Vorrede* realize its intention of diverting the reader from Hoffmann's *gefundener Schatz*? Or were Hoffmann's displacements too much for it? Did Jean Paul fall unknowingly into the very trap he was attempting to disarm? As de Man says of Derrida's apparent reproduction of logocentric misreadings of Rousseau, Jean Paul's titanic failure seems too well orchestrated to have been arbitrary.⁸

By not passing final judgment, by not signing his appeal to the reader as judge and jury over Hoffmann, Jean Paul deactivates the negative potential inherent in his *Vorrede*. He indeed transforms his *Vorrede* into a *Vorwort* - something contingent, supplementary, a semantic shifter of sorts whose assignation depends of the work it precedes. By not proclaiming himself a worthy judge of Hoffmann's *Fantasiestücke*, Jean Paul gets the timing right. In his *Vorrede* become *Vorwort* (thus moving from the historical, narrative past into the performative present), Jean Paul colludes with Hoffmann in the very displacements he seemingly sought to rectify. His abyssal signature mirrors Hoffmann's lack of signature abyssally. Jean Paul the *Richter* takes on the role of Jean Paul the alchemist, the projectionist, the strange figure producing images in the camera obscura. His name game of smoke and mirrors, his transformation of a *Vorrede* into a *Vorwort*, is as confusing and fascinating as Hoffmann's show of *Kleister- und Essigaale*. Jean Paul's text is *recht gut und wahr* only inasmuch as it cunningly sets the stage for a tradition of Hoffmann reception which will become obsessed with questions of naming, timing and propriety. For the moment, at least, in the bounds of his *Vorwort*/

Vorrede, Jean Paul is willing to leave these questions unanswered. For the moment, at least, he is willing to roll up his sleeves and play along (*fantasieren*) with Hoffmann.

Notes

1. It is important to note the preference of both authors for *Manier* over the more classical *Stil*. *Manier* suggests a subjective manipulation at work in the production of art. See Steinecke 61. Neither a mimesis which strives to be as 'lifelike' as possible nor a passive receptivity to the sublime—*Manier* is more 'hands on', more work (or active play) than inspiration. In a sense, the dispute between Jean Paul and Hoffmann opened by this text could be seen as involving whose *Manier* is more true to itself i.e. more down to earth, unaffected, or purely subjective.

2. *Titan*, described by Jean Paul as "das liebste und beste meiner Werke" (Berend 105), was conceived as a kind of anti-*Bildungsroman*, aimed at the generation who had been so deeply effected by *Wilhelm Meister*. Its lack of success cut Jean Paul to the quick. Because of its lukewarm reception, Jean Paul was unable to cast himself in the all too Goethean role of an *Erzieher*, even if conceived of as a kind of anti-*Erzieher*, more Rousseauian than Goethean, standing astride classic and romantic ideals of education and aesthetics.

It would be fruitful to examine to what extent Jean Paul found himself under the influence of his own Goethe-effect, as uncovered by Avital Ronell in *Dictations: On Haunted Writing*. The question also remains to be begged regarding the relationship between Hoffmann's subversion of authorial stability and Goethe's anxiety provoking, monolithic signature. The way in which Goethe himself was split and undermined yet preserved by his own excremental supplement, Eckermann, suggests that a figure as "small" or marginal as Hoffmann could have much to tell us about the way that signatures as monolithic as Goethe's function. If Goethe could not sign his name without Eckermann, it remains to be examined to what extent Jean Paul and others were unable to sign theirs without the supplement of Hoffmann.

3. The fictional review is signed with one of Jean Paul's pseudonyms, Frip and his name appears in italics in abbreviated form at the end of the preface.

4. For an in-depth discussion of the resonance of Lacan's Seminar on the purloined letter, see Barbara Johnson, "The Frame of Reference" in John P. Muller and William J. Richardson, eds., *The Purloined Poe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1988) 213 - 251.

5. Although Hoffmann would later become well known for the conceit of writing under the assumed identity of the editor and not author of his own works, by 1814 Jean Paul had already made this conceit an essential part of his own Manier. It is not unreasonable to imagine that in passing, a prospective reader might mistake the Fantasiestücke to have been written by Jean Paul and not by Hoffmann.

6. C.f. Jean Paul's polemic in the following:

Den jetzigen Salzgeist, auch in den Flug- und Tageblättern, in den Aufsätzen des "Morgenblattes", der "eleganten Zeitung", der "Heidelberger Jahrbücher", der Literaturzeitungen etc. würden wir schwerlich gegen die breiten dicken Salzpfannen der Bahrdte mit ihren Ketzerälmanachen, der Kiegsrat Kranze, der Vadekammer, der Wetzel, der allg. deutsh. Bibliothekare u.s.w. vertauschen wollen. (Hoffmann 59)
 Bahrdt, Kranz, Wetzel and Nicolai (editor of the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*), were all prominent figures in late 18th, early 19th Century popular German literature and all in direct competition with Jean Paul in the production of standards of comedic or satirical taste.

7. The lack of a reliable critical edition of Hoffmann's works comes into play here. In some editions, including the critical-historical edition by von Massen (from which most later editions draw their source material), Jean Paul signs his third name as "Fried.", not "Friedr.". It is unclear which spelling was intended by Jean Paul, or even if he had signed his third name as anything other than the usual "Fr.". With or without the "r", the truncated third name still contributes to the destabilization of Jean Paul's signature as author.

8. Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Blindness" in *Blindness and Insight* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983) 102 - 141.

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Licht und Finsternis in Büchners *Lenz*

Eric Kuchle

Es ist oft richtig behauptet worden, daß es bei Büchners *Lenz* nicht bloß um eine psychologische Krankheitsgeschichte geht, sondern auch um eine wichtige poetische Leistung, die in der Forschung als solches behandelt werden soll.¹ Der dichterischen Einheit des Werkes haben sich demzufolge viele Interpreten auf jeweilig unterschiedliche Weisen anzunähern versucht. Hermann Pongs liefert z.B. eine Gesamtinterpretation, die die Geisteszerrüttung Lenz' aus dem Leiden des Individuums an der kosmischen Polarität von Licht und Finsternis bzw. dem Ringen miteinander von "hellen und dunklen Mächten des Daseins" (Pongs 138) ableitet. Damit findet die psychologische Spannung der Lenz-Figur zwischen "Triebnatur und Geistnatur" (Pongs 142) kosmische Widerspiegelung und folglich eine metaphysische Dimension. Damit hat Pongs einen entscheidenden Ansatzpunkt zur Interpretation von *Lenz* entdeckt, indem er auf die Rolle der Hell-Dunkel-Polarität im Lenz-Fragment hinweist, aber leider ist seine Auffassung dieser Motivik allzu formelhaft klar und oberflächlich, um deren strukturelle Rolle bei der Vermittlung einer bildlichen Darstellung der sich letztendlich als Geisteszerrüttung manifestierenden Ich-Welt-Problematik zu erfassen; eine tiefere Untersuchung der Natur von Licht und Finsternis wird zeigen, daß sie in *Lenz* äußerst vielschichtig und durchaus nicht statisch ist, vielmehr sich als ein *wandelndes Verhältnis* zeigt, das als Hauptgliederungsmoment des Fragments den psychologischen Verfall des Protagonisten nicht nur dichterisch konkretisiert, sondern metaphysisch und erkenntnistheoretisch deutbar

macht, was unbedingt notwendig ist, um die kulturhistorische Signifikanz der Büchnerschen Darstellung des Falls Lenz' überhaupt wissenschaftlich aufzuhellen.

Die folgende Untersuchung wird zeigen, daß sich der im Dorf abspielende Haupttext des Lenz-Fragments in drei Teile strukturiert, die sich alle voneinander durch *Selbstprojektionen* Lenz' in verschiedenen Stufen seines von der Lichtsymbolik bildlich implizierten Weltverhältnisses absetzen. Diese Selbstprojektionen sind: 1) das Kind, das am Tisch im Pfarrhaus sitzt; 2) das kranke Mädchen in der Hütte; und 3) das tote Kind, das Lenz zu erwecken versucht. Es ist offensichtlich, daß mit der Licht-Dunkel-Motivik ein *Kindesmotiv* verknüpft wird; die Assoziation dieser beiden Motivsphären erhellt gegenseitig ihren jeweiligen symbolischen Gehalt. Darüber hinaus fungiert die *Expositionsszene* des Werkes—d.h., die Szene im Gebirg vor der Ankunft in Waldbach—als Einführung in die Gesamtproblematik der Lenz-Figur, in der sie auch die Licht-Dunkel-Symbolik erst entfaltet.

Die Expositionsszene

Gleich zu Beginn der Geschichte wird ein Mensch vorgestellt, dessen Verhältnis zur Welt prekär ist; Lenz ist ein Gebirgsbewohner—ein Mensch also, der keine feste Verankerung in der Welt genießt, und der von der Alltagswelt entfernt und isoliert ist. Der Grund dafür offenbart sich durch die Natursymbolik der Szene: "Anfangs drängte es ihm in der Brust, wenn das Gestein so wegsprang, der graue Wald sich unter ihm schüttelte, und der Nebel die Formen bald verschlang, bald die gewaltigen Glieder halb enthüllte [...]" (Büchner 101). Hier wird das erste Moment der Lichtsymbolik des Werkes schon sichtbar: *Licht als Erkenntnis*. Der Nebel droht ständig, die konkrete Welt, die Lenz umfaßt, ins Nichts aufzulösen, und damit den Wanderer auf seine Isolation hinzuweisen. Alle Bestimmtheit einer meßbaren und insofern dem Menschen leicht beherrschbaren Gegenstandswelt ist aufgehoben. Und weiter: "[...] es drängte in ihm, er suchte nach etwas, wie nach verlorenen Träumen, aber er fand nichts." (Büchner 101) Es ist insgesamt der Verlust der Selbstverständlichkeit des einst

erlebten Verhältnisses zur objektiven Welt, deren Verkörperung die von Lenz innerlich und äußerlich weit entfernte Alltagswelt ist—der Zustand, zu dem die ehemaligen Kinder der verlorenen Paradieses einmal verdammt wurden. Daraus ist es konsequent zu schliessen, daß Büchner durch die Lenz-Figur eine Darstellung der an der Schwelle ihrer Geschichtsentfaltung stehenden, gesamten Menschheit vermittelt, wenn man hinter allem menschlichen Handeln letztendlich den Trieb nach Erkenntnis bzw. Gott zu sehen vermag.

Der erkenntnissuchende Wanderer hört ab und zu mit dem Wandern auf, wenn er glaubt, endlich die Welt zu erfassen:

Nur manchmal, wenn der Sturm das Gewölk in die Täler warf, [...] und die Wolken wie wilde, wiehernde Rosse heraussprengten, und der Sonnenschein dazwischen durchging und sein blitzendes Schwert an den Schneeflächen zog, so daß ein helles, blendendes Licht über die Gipfel in die Täler schnitt [...] riß es ihm in der Brust, er stand, keuchend, den Leib vorwärts gebogen, Augen und Mund weit offen, er meinte, er müsse den Sturm in sich ziehen, Alles in sich fassen, er dehnte, sich aus und lag über die Erde, er wühlte sich in das All hinein [...]. (Büchner 101-2)

Aber das “helle, blendende Licht” der Erkenntnis erweist sich ihm sofort wieder als ein irreales “Schattenspiel,” und er wandert weiter: “Aber es waren nur Augenblicke, und dann erhob er sich nüchtern, fest, ruhig, als wäre ein Schattenspiel vor ihm vorübergezogen, er wußte von nichts mehr” (Büchner 102)—das mystische *unio*-Erlebnis ist bloß ein auf nichts außerhalb des Subjekts verweisender Traum. Der nächste logische Schritt wird dann unerbittlich gemacht: bei Eintritt der Nacht verselbstständigt sich das Fehlen vom Licht—und zwar nicht nur in der Natur selbst als bloße *Finsternis*, in der sich die konkrete Welt völlig auflöst (“Himmel und Erde verschmolzen in Eins” [Büchner 102]), sondern auch im eigenen Bewußtsein Lenz’ als die noch konkretere Bedrohung des *Wahnsinns*: “Es faßte ihn eine namenlose Angst in diesem Nichts, er war im Leeren [...] Es war als ginge ihm was Entsetzliches nach [...] als jage der Wahnsinn auf

Rossen hinter ihn.“ (Büchner 102) Wir wollen mit Aristoteles in diesem Kontext die Finsternis die böse, menschenfeindliche “Beraubung des Lichts” bezeichnen, der das Subjekt in die Leere der Isolation von der Welt wirft—“[...] etwas, das Menschen nicht ertragen können [...]” (Büchner 102) Es wäre an dieser Stelle nicht voreilig das zweite wesentliche, dem ersten eng verwandte Moment der Lichtsymbolik—nämlich *Licht als Sein*—vorzustellen, denn es ist eben mittels der paradoxen Verselbstständigung einer Nullität, d.h. des Nichts als Wahnsinn, daß die existentielle Angst Lenz’, die seinen Erkenntnisverlust beim Schwinden des Lichts beiwohnt, in den Vordergrund tritt. Denn die Angst ist Produkt seines verlorenen Verhältnisses nicht nur zum Erkenntnisgrund, sondern wichtiger zum *Seinsgrund*, der das erkennende Ich und die erkannte Welt umfaßt. Hier wird letzten Endes nicht nur das endgültige Ergebnis der Geschichte Lenz’, sondern damit die wesentliche *moderne* Problematik von Erkenntnis und Sein antizipiert.

Das erhellt Kindergesicht

Die Expositionsszene ist insofern von großem Belang, als sie die Problematik der Lenz-Figur anhand der Lichtsymbolik in ihrem ganzen Umfang aufreißt. Angedeutet wird dadurch, wie schon gesagt, der weitere Verlauf der Geschichte, der—sehr simpifiziert ausgedrückt—der Versuch und letztendlich das Scheitern von Lenz ist, eine unmittelbare Urnähe zur Welt wiederherzustellen—zugleich das Scheitern des Regressionsversuchs, zum unreflektierten Geisteszustand zurückzukehren.

Bei der nächtlichen Ankunft von Lenz zeichnet sich das Dorf Waldbach so heraus, daß durch dessen Häuser *Licht* ausstrahlt, was auf Lenz wohltuend einwirkt:

Er ging durch das Dorf, die Lichter schienen durch die Fenster, er sah hinein im Vorbeigehen, Kinder am Tische, alte Weiber, Mädchen, Alles ruhige, stille Gesichter, es war ihm, als müsse das Licht von ihnen ausstrahlen, es ward ihm leicht [...]. (Büchner 102)

Den einfachen Dorfleuten ist das Licht wesensverwandt; sie sind noch naturnah, ungespalten, *lichthaft*. Ihre wesensbedingte Ferne zum gespaltenen Lenz findet dadurch Ausdruck, daß dieser, noch der Wanderer, die lichthaften Leute durch deren Fenster betrachtet. Er ist draußen, aus der Idylle ausgeschlossen, auf die Betrachter-Haltung des reflektierenden Menschen angewiesen.

Als Lenz aber das Pfarrhaus endlich erreicht, fühlt er sich nicht sofort "leicht," denn er muß sich den um den Tisch (Einheitssymbol!) sitzenden Leuten vorstellen. Oberlin fragt ihn, ob "[...]" er nicht gedruckt [...] sei, und Lenz ist sofort begierig, sich von seiner Vergangenheit zu entfernen: "Ja, aber belieben Sie, mich nicht darnach zu beurteilen." (Büchner 103) Dann beginnt er, sich durch Unterhaltung in den Kreis der Dorfleute zu integrieren, wodurch er ruhig wird. So betrachtet er die Leute in dieser Szene:

[...] nach und nach wurde er ruhiger, das heimliche Zimmer und die stillen Gesichter, die aus dem Schatten hervortraten, das helle Kindergesicht, auf dem alles Licht zu ruhen schien und das neugierig, vertraulich aufschaute, bis zur Mutter, die hinten im Schatten engelgleich stille saß [...] es war ihm als tränen alte Gestalten, vergessene Gesichter wieder aus dem Dunkeln, alte Lieder wachten auf, er war weg, weit weg. (Büchner 103)

Das beleuchtete Kind ist hier nichts anderes als eine Projektion des eigenen Ich von Lenz in seinen Kindheitszustand, in dem er noch ein Vertrauensverhältnis zur Mutter bzw. zur Welt hatte. Er fühlt sich wieder "zu Haus" (Büchner 103) wieder—aber nicht im normalen Sinn von allgemeinem Sich-wohl-Fühlen, sondern eben weil die Situation des "heimlichen Zimmers" Lenz regressiv in die Sphärenferner durch die alte Lieder und vergessenen Gesichter evoziert—der Kindesvergangenheit rückt. Die Lichtsymbolik des Werkes wird hier durch ihre weitere Verknüpfung mit den Dorfleuten und noch entscheidender, mit dem *Kind* also noch differenzierter: das Licht ist Symbol der Erkenntnis und des Seins, wie sie noch in unproblematischer Versöhnung miteinander präsent sind im

ungespaltenen Wesen des Kindes. Das Licht signalisiert bei Lenz das Verlangen, das bedrückende, isolierende Selbstbewußtsein loszuwerden, um die kindliche, paradiesische Nähe der Menschheit zur Natur wiederherzustellen. Insofern gründet die christliche Religiösität der Lenz-Figur ausschließlich auf den Worten Jesu: "Lasset die Kindlein, und wehret ihnen nicht, zu mir zu kommen; denn solcher ist das Himmelreich."²

Weil das Kind bloß eine Selbstprojektion von Lenz ist und dieser noch die Betrachterdistanz bewahren muß, kann er sich mit der Projektion nicht konkret identifizieren. Er kann also das heimliche Gefühl ins ihm zugewiesenen Schlafzimmer nicht mitbringen; er ist erneut isoliert, denn das Erlebnis des Zimmers im Pfarrhaus, "mit seinen Lichtern und lieben Gesichtern [...]" (Büchner 103), wird zu "Schatten" und "Traum" (Büchner 103). Sogleich behauptet sich wieder die existentielle Gefahr der Finsternis: "[...] das Licht war erloschen, die Finsternis verschlang Alles; eine unnennbare Angst erfaßte ihn [...]" (Büchner 103).

Es gelingt Lenz aber allmählich, sich ins Dorfleben zu integrieren, indem er Pfarrer Oberlin ständig begleitet und dabei an den Geschäften des Dorfes teilnimmt. Dies leitet hin zu einer Episode, in der sich die frühere Selbstprojektion zur eigentlichen Selbstidentifikation entwickelt:

Eines Morgens ging er hinaus, die Nacht war Schnee gefallen, im Tal lag heller Sonnenschein [...] Er kam bald vom Weg ab und eine sanfte Höhe hinauf, keine Spur von Fußtritten mehr, neben einem Tannenwalde hin, die Sonne schnitt Kristalle, der Schnee war leicht und flockig, [...] Alles so still, [...] es wurde ihm heimlich nach und nach, [...] ein heimliches Weihnachtsgefühl beschlich ihn, er meinte manchmal, seine Mutter müsse hinter einem Baume hervortreten, groß, und ihm sagen, sie hätte ihm dies Alles beschert; wie er hinunterging, sah er, daß um seinen Schatten sich ein Regenbogen von Strahlen legte, als

hätte ihn was an der Stirn berührt, das Wesen sprach ihn an (Büchner 105-6).

Das in der vorangehenden Szene erschienene symbolische Schema von Licht-Kind-Mutter kommt hier erneut vor. Die Mutter tritt als Vertreterin der Welt hervor, und diese präsentiert sie Lenz als ein ihm Geschenktes. Deshalb fühlt er sich in der natürlichen Umgebung "heimlich"; er ist mit ihr in der Vereinigung eines Mutter-Kind-Vertrauensverhältnisses. Endlich weist die Lichtsymbolik der Szene auf das metaphysische Moment der Ich-Welt-Vereinigung als eines mystisch-ekstatischen *unio*-Erlebnisses: Die Sonnenstrahlen bilden sich zum Regenbogen—das uralte Symbol der Versöhnung der Menschheit mit Gott.

Diese Szene leitet den Teil der Erzählung ein, in dem sich Lenz unter den Dorfleuten geheilt bzw. mit der Welt versöhnt sieht. Die Erzählung spielt sich weiter ab, indem er sich eine Beschäftigung bzw. eine kurstfristige *raison d'être* findet; er beschließt, die Predigt des folgenden Sonntags anstelle Oberlins zu übernehmen, was dieser ihm gern gestattet. Er ist in dieser Periode glücklich, wobei die Finsternis seiner Existenz, die existentielle Angst aufgehoben wird: "Seine Nächte wurden ruhig." (Büchner 106) Die Predigt führt Lenz wiederum in eine mystische Berührung mit Gott und dem Universum: "Jetzt ein anderes Sein, göttliche, zuckende Lippen bückten sich über ihm nieder und sogen sich an seine Lippen [...]." (Büchner 115) Aber die Geschichte kann nicht mit einer solchen Harmonie enden; es muß die bedrohende Finsternis zu ihrer in der Expositionsszene versprochenen Geltung kommen—und, in der Tat, schlägt sich der Zustand Lenz' im nächsten Teil der Geschichte völlig um.

Das kranke Mädchen

Über das Kunstgespräch (dessen zentrale Wichtigkeit Gegenstand späterer Erörterung sein wird) führt der Faden der Lenz-Geschichte bis zu der an Lenz gerichteten Ermahnung Kaufmanns, "[...] er solle sich ein Ziel stecken" (Büchner 111), wogegen Lenz heftig reagiert:

Hier weg, weg! nach Haus? Toll werden dort? [...] Laßt mich doch in Ruhe! Nur ein bißchen Ruhe jetzt, wo es mir ein wenig wohl wird. Hier weg? Ich verstehe das nicht, mit den zwei Worten ist die Welt verhunzt. (Büchner 111)

Lenz betrachtet in den Worten Kaufmanns die Gefährdung seiner noch labilen Heilsverfassung durch die Ansprüche der von diesem vertretenen, feindlichen Außenwelt. Damit deutet sich an, was in der Hütte-Szene vollbracht wird.

Unmittelbar nach diesem unglücklichen Gepräch von Lenz mit Kaufmann geht dieser mit der Begleitung Kaufmanns auf eine Reise in die Schweiz. Weil es Lenz "unheimlich" (Büchner 112) ist, ohne Oberlin im Haus zu bleiben, beschließt er, den anderen bis ins Gebirg zu begleiten. Auf dem Rückweg nach Waldbach gerät der jetzt allein reitende Lenz in einen traumhaften Geisteszustand. Es wird alsdann finster, wobei die Bestimmtheiten der Außenwelt—wie in der Expositionsszene—aufgehoben werden: "[...] es verschmolz ihm Alles in eine Linie, wie eine steigende und sinkende Welle, es war ihm als läge er an einem unendlichen Meer, das leise auf und ab wogte." (Büchner 112)

Das darauf Folgende bildet die völlige Umkehr der initialen Erlösungsszene, der Lenz bei seiner Ankunft in Waldbach dem Dunklen, das ihm jetzt wieder droht, entzogen wird. Er kommt zu einer Hütte, in der ein krankes Mädchen liegt und eine alte Frau "mit schnarrender Stimme aus einem Gesangbuch" (Büchner 112) singt. Die Dichte der Hell-Dunkel-Motivik dieser Szene ist eindringend: Die mechanisch schnarrende Frau ist im Dunkeln; denn ihr fehlt die aus einer unmittelbaren Nähe zur Natur hervorgehende Lebendigkeit der Religiosität, die Lenz vorher als dem einfachen Volk zueigen gesehen hat:

[...] dieser Glaube, dieser ewige Himmel im Leben: jetzt erst ging ihm die heilige Schrift auf. Wie den Leuten die Natur so nah trat, alles in himmlischen Mysterien; aber nicht gewaltsam majestatisch, sondern noch vertraut. (Büchner 105)

Als Mutter des Mädchens führt die alte Frau die symbolische Mutter-Natur-Assoziation weiter: Jetzt entlarvt sich die Außenwelt als nichtig, ja als der Tod selbst. Das *Licht* der Lampe dagegen fällt ausschließlich auf das “bleiche Gesicht” (Büchner 112) des Mädchens, dessen physische Krankheit auf die wachsende innere Krankheit Lenz’ verweist und nunmehr als Selbstprojektion Lenz’ im verschlimmerten Geisteszustand dient. Das Kind-Mutter-Vertrauensverhältnis ist hier offensichtlich gefährdet; es scheint, als ob die Mutter, bald ihr Lied schnarrend, bald mit den Nachbarn plaudernd, wenig Interesse an ihrem kranken Kind hat. Außerdem kann hier vom Topos vom Licht in der Finsternis im Zusammenhang mit der Dorfexistenz kaum die Rede sein, denn wie kann das Licht weiterfungieren, als Seinssymbol die Wesensverwandtheit und -verbindung zwischen Mensch und Welt bzw. Subjekt und Objekt darzustellen, wenn das Mädchen *krank* ist? Weiter entwickelt sich also die Lichtsymbolik der Szene:

Durch das leise Singen des Mädchens und die Stimme der Alten zugleich tönte das Sausen des Windes bald näher, bald ferner, und der bald helle, bald verhüllte Mond warf sein wechselndes Licht traumartig in die Stube [...] Lenz sah auf, und der Mond warf sein stilles Licht auf ihre [des Mädchens] Züge, von denen ein unheimlicher Glanz zu strahlen schien; zugleich schnarrte die Alte und über diesem Wechseln und Sinken des Lichts, den Tönen und Stimmen schlief endlich Lenz tief ein. (Büchner 113)

Lenz’ Zuflucht in die Sphäre der einfachen Dorfleute bietet keine Erlösung mehr vom gespaltenen Selbst, denn die auf Irrealität hinweisende Unbestimmtheit der ins Vage der Lichtschwankung suspendierten Außenwelt bricht mit diesem “wechselnden Licht” in die Hütte hinein. Das vom Mond erhelle Angesicht des Mädchens ist ihm in diesem Moment – ganz im Gegensatz zu dem des am Tisch sitzenden Kindes – unheimlich. Das heimliche Licht des gesunden Weltverhältnisses erweist sich also als Fiktion, die sogenannte objektive, außer dem Subjekt bestehende Realität als irrealer Traum.

sitzenden Kindes—*unheimlich*. Das heimliche Licht des gesunden Weltverhältnisses erweist sich also als Fiktion, die sogenannte objektive, außer dem Subjekt bestehende Realität als irrealer Traum.

Lenz gerät nach diesem Erlebnis in einen allgemeinen Zustand der Verzweifelung: “Die Welt war ihm helle gewesen, und er spürte sich ein Regen und Wimmeln nach einem Abgrund, zu dem ihn eine unerbittliche Gewalt hinriß.” (Büchner 114) Nachdem die Außenwelt, mit der Lenz eine Verbindung wiederherzustellen sich sehnte, sich als bedeutungslos und nichtig entlarvt, muß sich die existentielle Angst wieder in sein Bewußtsein als konkrete Lebensbedrohung ziehen, die das Licht beraubt, denn hier, wie bei Eintritt der Nacht in der Expositionsszene, existiert nichts mehr außer dem einzelnen Geist—die Finsternis einer absoluten Negation jeglicher Erkenntnismöglichkeit. In der nächsten Szene vollzieht sich diese Bedrohung.

Das tote Kind

Die eng mit dem Kindesmotiv verbundene Lichtsymbolik von Lenz—und damit die Geschichte selbst—erreicht mit der Szene, in der Lenz ein totes Kind zu erwecken versucht, die endgültige Phase. Es handelt sich hier um eine dritte Selbstprojektion Lenz'; die Bitte an Gott um die Wiederbelebung der Kindesleiche läuft parallel mit dem ständigen verzweifelten Versuch Lenz', die innere Leere seiner Existenz bzw. das Gefühl des Erstorbenseins—die Folge der in der letzten Szene stattfindenden Entdeckung der Sinnlosigkeit der Welt—zu entkommen, “[...] eine Glut in sich zu wecken [...].” (Büchner 115) Es ist eine Bitte an Gott gerichtet, den Lenz vorher in Momenten der mystischen Ekstase als letztendlichen Sinnbezug zwischen Ich und Universum wahrnahm. Bei den Dorfleuten gibt es diesen Gott nicht mehr, denn sie haben jetzt überhaupt kein Interesse mehr an dem Kind. Mit dem Tod des Kindes hört also das Vertrauensverhältnis zwischen Subjekt (Kind/Ich) und Objekt (Dorfleute/Welt) völlig auf, und die Leute gehen bloß “gleichgültig ihrem Geschäfte nach” (Büchner 115), als ob das Kind nie gelebt hätte. Wie Lenz ist das Kind aus der Welt verstoßen, von Gott selbst abgewiesen. Der

schönen Leiche bleibt deshalb nur der Verfall; sie ist bloße Materie, ohne ein höheres, sinn- und lebenschenkendes Prinzip:

Lenz schauderte, wie er die kalten Glieder berührte und die halbgeöffneten gläsernen Augen sah. Das Kind kam ihm so verlassen vor, und er sich so allein und einsam; er warf sich über die Leiche nieder; der Tod erschreckte ihn, ein heftiger Schmerz faßte ihn an, diese Züge, dieses stille Gesicht sollten verwesen, er warf sich nieder, er betete mit allem Jammer der Verzweiflung, daß Gott ein Zeichen an ihm tue, und das Kind beleben möge [...] Dann erhob er sich und sprach laut und fest: 'Stehe auf und wandle!' Aber die Wände hallten ihm nüchtern den Ton nach, daß es zu spotten schien, und die Leiche blieb kalt. (Büchner 115-6)

Die in der Expositionsszene antizipierte Bedrohung der bösen Finsternis realisiert sich jetzt: Lenz wird sofort vom Wahnsinn gepackt und wird von ihm ins Gebirg "gejagt" (Büchner 116). Damit wird die Welt selbst von Lenz auch als gottverlassene Leiche erlebt, wie es die Lichtsymbolik ganz entscheidend zeigt:

So kam er auf sie Höhe des Gebirges, und das ungewisse Licht dehnte sich hinunter, wo die weißen Steinmassen lagen, und der Himmel war ein dummes blaues Auge, und der Mond stand ganz lächerlich drin, einfältig. Lenz mußte laut lachen, und mit dem Lachen griff der Atheismus in ihn und faßte ihn ganz sicher und ruhig und fest. Er wußte nicht mehr, was ihn vorhin so bewegt hatte, [...] er ging kalt und unerschütterlich durch das unheimliche Dunkel - es war ihm Alles leer und hohl [...]. (Büchner 116)

Das, was vorher Symbol des Seins- und Erkenntnisgrundes der Dinge war, enthüllt sich hier bloß als der Schein vom toten, dummen Auge; insofern, als das Licht in den Kontext einer sinnlosen Welt gestellt wird, besteht sein Wesen jetzt darin, daß es bloß dem Subjekt

diese feindliche Welt offenbart bzw. vermittelt. Endlich wird das Licht also, wie vorausgesagt, seines eigentlichen Wesens als Erkenntnis- und Seinsgrund *beraubt*.

Daß Lenzens Seele mit dem Kind stirbt, zeigt sich im Rest der Geschichte durch die vollkommene Gleichgültigkeit, mit dem er sich und die Welt betrachtet. Er bemüht sich nicht weiter, die Spaltung zwischen Ich und Welt zu eliminieren, um zum kindlich-ungespaltenen Zustand zu gelangen, sondern gibt der Spaltung nach, ja vergrößert sie bewußt; er bekämpft Langeweile, indem er die "wahnwitzigsten Possen auszusinnen" (Büchner 121) sucht, also seine Vergangenheit als Wahrheitssucher vergißt und stattdessen nihilistisch die Welt als Spielball seines willkürlichen Geistes betrachtet: "Es war, [...] als könnte er die Welt mit den Zähnen zermalmen und sie dem Schöpfer ins Gesicht speien." (Büchner 116) Die innere Leere Lenz' steigert sich ganz konsequent bis zum Selbstentleibungsversuch. Das Scheitern, in Waldbach ein gesundes Verhältnis zur Welt wiederherzustellen, ist jetzt völlig realisiert: Er muß wegen des Selbstmordversuchs auf Befehl Oberlins Waldbach-Lenz' persönliche Idylle des gottgesegneten Kindesreiches verlassen. Im Wagen sieht er, als er zurück nach Waldbach schaut, wie "[...] die Gegenstände sich in der Finsternis [...]" (Büchner 123) verlieren. Die Finsternis verschlingt die Idylle.

* * *

Wie schon gesagt, bietet die von Büchner dargestellte geistige Verfallsgeschichte von Lenz kulturhistorische Einsicht in die Entwicklung des modernen Bewußtseins- und zugleich in die mit ihm verbundene Seins- und Erkenntnisproblematik. Den kulturhistorischen Rahmen vermittelt Büchner mittels seiner Verwendung der Lichtsymbolik; wenn man das Licht in *Lenz* als Symbol einerseits des *Seins* und andererseits der *Erkenntnis* sieht, erkennt man als das endgültige Ergebnis der Geschichte den Untergang der europäischen Lichtmetaphorik. Dieser ist Ausdruck der Krisensituation der europäischen Geistesgeschichte, in der der traditionell mit dem Licht identifizierte absolute Seins- und Erkenntnisgrund schwindet. Das

macht Büchner allein schon mit seinem Lenz-Fragment—also ohne Rücksicht auf seine anderen Werke und direkte Aussagen, die sonst zu derselben Deutung führen könnte—zum Verkünder des Nihilismus, der in der Tat die spätere Entfaltung der Geschichte des Abendlandes bestimmen wird.

Notes

1. Vgl. Ludwig Büttner: "Die Erzaehlung *Lenz* ist weit mehr als ein Krankheitsprotokoll oder 'eine klinische Studie', wie Robert Mühler annimmt. Sie ist ein dichterisches Meisterwerk, das uns im Innersten aufröhrt und die geistige Krise eines jungen intelligenten, zerrissenen und empfindlichen Menschen darstellt." (156)
2. Mt 19:14. Lutherbibel Standardausgabe.

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“Was kommt, das ist ja alles schon geschehen” Die Verwendung von Motiven aus der Christus Passion in Max Frischs *Andorra*

Andreas Nolte

Es ist nicht leicht, über *Andorra* noch etwas Neues zu schreiben. Als Erfolg und Mißerfolg gefeiert und verrissen, als großes Theater und Ärgernis gleichermaßen angesehen, und als Schullektüre in deutsche Lehrpläne aufgenommen, hat es verständlicherweise seit seinem Erscheinen im Jahre 1961 eine wahre Flut von unterschiedlichsten Interpretationen und Kritiken hervorgerufen.¹ Die Suche nach einem neuen Blickwinkel bei der Betrachtung dieses Werkes lässt sehr schnell erkennen, daß wohl alles bereits irgendwann einmal darüber gesagt worden ist.

Selbst die auf den ersten Blick als etwas weit hergeholt anmutende Parallele zwischen Andri und Jesus ist tatsächlich vereinzelt bereits angedeutet worden. Natürlich gibt es unübersehbare Zitate und Anspielungen aus der Bibel im Allgemeinen, und dies ist besonders in Interpretationen jüngeren Datums auch hervorgehoben worden, aber die Vielzahl der Parallelen gerade zur Leidensgeschichte Jesu ist außer einigen wenigen allgemeinen Bemerkungen bisher nicht detailliert beschrieben und untersucht worden.² Gerade dieser Betrachtungswinkel erlaubt jedoch eine völlig neue Perspektive auf das Drama. Wenn man die These vertreten will, daß Max Frisch mit Bedacht viele Ähnlichkeiten in den Leidensgeschichten von Andri und Jesus in sein Werk eingebaut hat, um der erfundenen Handlung im fiktiven Kleinstaat Andorra einen aussage-kräftigen Unterbau aus einem traditionell überlieferten und bei den meisten Zuschauern

weitgehend bekannten Bereich zu geben, dann muß man zeigen können, daß es diese Parallelen auch inhaltlich durch das gesamte Stück hindurch gibt und daß sie sich eben nicht nur auf einige allgemeine Zitate aus der Bibel beschränken. Die vorliegende Arbeit unternimmt den Versuch, auch diejenigen Ähnlichkeiten und Übereinstimmungen in der Handlung aufzuzeigen, die sich nicht nur aus analogen Textstellen ableiten lassen.³ In ihrer Gesamtheit geben die Entsprechungen zur Passion Christi dem Drama dann eine Autorität und Wahrhaftigkeit, die dem Geschehen auf der Bühne eine größere Nachdrücklichkeit und Überzeugungskraft verleihen. Der Zuschauer kann und soll in der Figur des Andri und in den Abscheulichkeiten, die gegen ihn begangen werden, das größere Thema erkennen können, die bekannte Geschichte, der er seinen Glauben schon einmal geschenkt hat. Dies kann dann die Handlung aus den geographischen Grenzen von "Andorra" und aus der kurzsichtigen Betrachtung des Einzelfalls Andri herausheben. Das Drama wird damit zur Parabel. In Verbindung mit der Lebens- und Leidensgeschichte Jesu ist schließlich auch die immer wieder gestellte Frage, welches tatsächliche Land Max Frisch hier wohl gemeint habe, belanglos: "Andorra" ist dann zeitlich und räumlich allgegenwärtig und auch "Andri" ist überall zu finden.⁴

Bereits zu Beginn des ersten Bildes gibt es mehrere deutliche Hinweise auf die Parallelen zwischen Andri und Jesus. Das Land schmückt sich für einen christlichen Feiertag, der mit einer Prozession beginnt und mit einer Hinrichtung enden wird. Von Barblin erfahren wir in ihren ersten Sätzen vom morgigen Sanktgeorgstag. Daß dieser St. Georg im Jahre 303 n. Chr. Als Märtyrer starb, kann als erster Hinweis auf einen Märtyrertod auch in diesem Stück gedeutet werden.⁵ Die scheinheilige Frage des Soldaten, ob Barblins Bräutigam Andri vielleicht ein „Engel“ (7)⁶ sei, kennzeichnet diesen—wie Jesus—als ein Wesen „nicht von dieser Welt“ (Joh 8,23).⁷ Auch des Paters Vergleich der Judenverfolgungen im feindlichen Nachbarland mit dem "Kindermord zu Bethlehem" (10), der befohlen wurde, um des Jesuskind zu töten, verdeutlicht, in welchem Sinnzusammenhang die nachfolgende Handlung betrachtet

werden kann. Nach diesen Andeutungen ist dann der aufgestellte „Pfahl“ (12), der von Barblin als Tötungswerkzeug beschrieben wird, zweifelsfrei als Hinweis auf eine kommende Hinrichtung zu werten, die zudem an die Kreuzigungsszene Jesu erinnern wird. Bevor Andri überhaupt aufgetreten ist, wird durch diese nur kurz angedeuteten Parallelen zu Leben und Tod des Jesus auf sein eigenes Schicksal hingewiesen. Der allgemeine Bekanntheitsgrad der Passionsgeschichte erlaubt darüber hinaus eine Konzentration des Zuschauers auf das Wie und das Warum von Andris Tod, und weniger auf das Was selbst.

Andris Herkunft und sein Aufwachsen weisen im Verlauf des Dramas dann weitere deutliche Parallelen mit Umständen im Leben Jesu auf. Beide haben eine nicht eindeutig bestimmbarer Geburt, die zu Spekulationen im Volk Anlaß geben: Andri ist halb Andorraner und halb Sohn einer „Schwarzen,“⁸ während Jesus halb Jude und halb der Sohn Gottes ist. Beide wachsen ohne einen leiblichen Elternteil auf und werden von einer dritten Person angenommen; Andri von der Ehefrau seines leiblichen Vaters und Jesus vom Ehemann seiner leiblichen Mutter.

Auch der Beginn ihrer Verfolgung bereits kurz nach der Geburt und die Flucht in das Nachbarland „zur Zeit der großen Morde“ (77)–Andri wird zur Rettung vom Lehrer nach Andorra, Jesus wird von Josef nach Ägypten gebracht–ist in beiden Biographien zu finden. Gemeinsam ist ihnen dann auch ein gestörtes Verhältnis zum Heimatbegriff. Während Andri durch die Annahme der ihm aufgezwungenen Rolle als Jude seine wahre Identität aufgibt und sein Fremdsein mit „ich habe keine Heimat“ (86) anerkennt, ist auch Jesus aufgrund seiner Herkunft und der ihm gestellten Lebensaufgabe ohne einen Platz, der ihm Heimat sein könnte: „Die Füchse haben Gruben, die Vögel unter dem Himmel haben Nester; aber der Menschensohn hat nichts, wo er sein Haupt hinlege“ (Lk 9,58). Andri wird von den Andorranern so umfassend ausgegrenzt, daß sie ihm keinerlei freie Selbstentfaltung, nicht einmal den Wunsch nach dem einfachen Beruf eines Tischler, zugestehen, weil dieser nicht zu dem Bild passen würde, das sie sich von Andri gemacht haben. Die

Parallele zu Jesus, der sein Berufsleben als Zimmermann begonnen hat, ist hierbei natürlich offensichtlich. Aber auch in dem erzwungenen Aufgeben dieses Berufes liegt eine Übereinstimmung, denn Jesus ist hierzu ebenso gezwungen worden, um seine gottgegebene Aufgabe erfüllen zu können.

Besonders auffällig im Vergleich der Lebensbeschreibungen ist die Rolle der wahren Väter. In beiden Texten sind sie diejenigen, die ihren Söhnen eine besondere Identität und Aufgabe auf den Lebensweg mitgeben.⁹ Während der Lehrer Andri mit der Lüge über die jüdische Herkunft ausstattet, gibt Gott an Jesus den Auftrag, in seinem Namen zu predigen. Beide Söhne werden von ihren Vätern—sozusagen als Mittel zum Zweck—in die Konfrontation mit den Menschen geschickt, um hier eine erhoffte Wirkung zu erzielen. Der Lehrer sagt über seine Absichten: "Sie werden sich wundern, wenn ich die Wahrheit sage. Ich werde dieses Volk vor seinen Spiegel zwingen, sein Lachen wird ihm gefrieren." (15) Seinem Sohn jedoch eine falsche Identität zu geben, um damit an einem lebendigen Beispiel veranschaulichen zu können, wie sich die Menschen in einem anderen Menschen irren können, ist nicht nur moralisch zu verurteilen, sondern im Falle des Lehrers wohl auch eine Selbstlüge und Fortsetzung seiner Neigung zur Prahlgerei. Als die Señora ihm später vorwirft, nur aus Feigheit und "weil auch du Angst hattest vor deinen Leuten" (78) die Lüge in die Welt gesetzt zu haben, schweigt er dann auch beharrlich, weil die Wahrheit damit offensichtlich gesagt ist. Auch Jesus ist von seinem Vater in die Welt geschickt worden, um den Menschen die Augen zu öffnen und ihnen ihre Sünden bewußt zu machen. In seinem Fall gibt es jedoch gewiß keine Zweideutigkeit über die Motivation des Vaters; man könnte hier sagen, der Zweck heilige die Mittel. Beide Väter liefern ihre Söhne am Ende den Verfolgern aus und sind bei deren Hinrichtung anwesend ohne zu helfen. Der Lehrer reißt Andri bei der "Judenschau" das Tuch vom Kopf—die Beteuerung seiner Vaterschaft kommt hier viel zu spät—and gibt ihn damit endgültig den Mörfern preis. Auch Gott lässt seinen Sohn verurteilen und kreuzigen ohne einzugreifen. In beiden Lebensbeschreibungen bedeuten die Vorgaben durch die Väter eine

schwere Bürde für die Söhne, die letztendlich zu deren Verfolgung und Tod führen werden.

Eine Auswirkung der Vorbestimmung des Lebens durch die Väter ist die Bildung einer Opposition gegen Andri und Jesus, die am Ende ihren Tod verlangen wird. Der Ausgangspunkt für die Ausgrenzung und den Beginn des Hasses ist in beiden Fällen das Anfertigen und Verbreiten von Vorurteilen durch ihre Gegner. Andri werden vor allem Geldgier, Feigheit, Ehrgeiz und Überempfindlichkeit vorgeworfen. Obwohl es gerade die Andorraner selber sind, die diese Eigenschaften deutlich an den Tag legen, wird er durch diese Vorurteile in den Augen des Volkes zum Außenseiter und das vermeintliche Anderssein wird zum Grund dafür genommen, ihn zu verfolgen und zu töten. Dies steht ebenfalls am Beginn der Leidensgeschichte Jesu. Auch er wird von den Gegnern, die seinen Einfluß auf das Volk fürchten, als jemand beschrieben, der er nicht ist. Als "Fresser und Weinsäufer" (Mt 10,19) und als jemand mit einem "bösen Geist" (Joh 8,48) wird er beschimpft, um Teile des Volkes damit gegen ihn aufzutzen zu können. Als Verführer, Aufwiegler und Lügner bezeichnet, wird auch er verfolgt und später getötet. So wie Andri von seinen Feinden mit der Bezeichnung "Jud" unter Andorranern zum Aussenseiter abgestempelt wird und seine Lebensberechtigung verliert, wird Jesus von seinen Gegnern als "Samariter" unter Juden dem Tode geweiht.

In beiden Lebensgeschichten findet sich eine hervorgehobene Szene, die als der Beginn der eskalierenden Verfolgung durch die Gegner und als deutlicher Hinweis auf den tödlichen Ausgang angesehen werden kann. Sie finden beide ausdrücklich an einem Sonnabend statt. In der Konfrontation mit dem Tischler werden zum ersten Mal im Drama Andri gegenüber sehr abfällige und verletzende Bemerkungen über das Judentum gemacht. Der Tischler belehrt Andri sarkastisch "lobpreiset eure Zedern vom Libanon, aber hierzuland wird in andorranischer Eiche gearbeitet" (32), er bezeichnet ihn abwertend als "deinesgleichen" (33) und begegnet

Andris Rechtfertigung abschätzig mit "hier [ist] keine Klagemauer." (35) Diese Bemerkungen sind dazu geeignet, die Herkunft, die man Andri zuschreibt, deutlich von den Andorranern

zu trennen und ihre eingebildete Übermachtstellung hervorzuheben. Die nun immer offensichtlich werdendere Ausweglosigkeit für Andri in dieser Gesellschaft wird nicht nur durch die völlige Ignorierung der faktischen Wahrheit über die Herstellung der beiden Stühle verdeutlicht—Andri fragt resignierend “warum seid ihr stärker als die Wahrheit?” (35)—der aggressive und verachtende Ton des Tischlers ist darüber hinaus eine Vorausdeutung des tragischen Endes. Die vergleichbare Szene im Neuen Testament ist die Heilung eines Krüppels am Sabbat. Auch hier ist dies die erste große Konfrontation zwischen Jesus und seinen Gegnern, den jüdischen Bewahrern der überlieferten Traditionen. Jesus heilt den Kranken ohne Rücksicht darauf, daß nach den jüdischen Gesetzen jegliche Arbeit am Sabbat verboten ist. Diese als Herausforderung der bestehenden Ordnung empfundene Handlung führt dazu, daß die Pharisäer sich erstmals entschieden gegen Jesus stellen und sie “hielten Rat über ihn, wie sie ihn umbrächten.” (Mt 12,14) In beiden Texten geht also an diesem Sonnabend die Gegnerschaft eindeutig über das bloße Festhalten an Vorurteilen hinaus und erstreckt sich nun auch auf die Bedrohung des Lebens.

Die Verbreitung und Wirkung der Vorurteile im Volk, gegen die selbst die offensichtliche Wahrheit nun nicht mehr ankommen kann, wird ebenfalls in der Stuhlszene eindrucksvoll beschrieben. Die nur scheinbar wahrheitssuchende Befragung des Gesellen, welchen Stuhl er gemacht habe, zeigt zum einen die Gewißheit des Tischlers, daß er sich auf die Falschaussage eines ‘seinesgleichen’ verlassen kann, zum anderen wird die Einschüchterung des Gesellen deutlich, der die Wahrheit nicht auszusprechen wagt und sich zur eigenen Rettung in die allgemeine Floskel “jeder rechte Stuhl ist verzapft...” (33) flüchtet.¹⁰ Auch hierzu gibt es im Neuen Testament eine sehr vergleichbare Begebenheit. Hier wissen sich die Pharisäer in der gleichen Position der Macht, als sie die Eltern eines Blindgeborenen nach seiner Heilung durch Jesus fragen, ob ihr Sohn wirklich blind gewesen sei und ob sie glaubten, daß Jesus ihn geheilt habe. Sie verleugnen zwar nicht die Blindheit ihres Sohnes, aber die Heilung stellen sie in Frage: “Aber wieso er nun sehend ist, wissen wir nicht,

und wer ihm seine Augen aufgetan hat, wissen wir auch nicht" (Joh 9,21). In beiden Fällen haben die als Vertreter des Volkes Befragten Angst davor, sich gegen die bereits weitverbreiteten Vorurteile aufzulehnen und verleugnen die offensichtliche Wahrheit, weil sie um ihre eigene Stellung innerhalb der Gesellschaft fürchten. Die drohenden Repressalien werden ihnen deutlich genannt: Der Geselle muß Angst davor haben, seinen Arbeitsplatz zu verlieren und die Eltern des Blinden befürchten, aus der Synagoge ausgestoßen zu werden. Dabei brauchen die Befragten nicht einmal ausdrücklich zu lügen; das Verschweigen der Wahrheit genügt, um die Vorurteile zu bestärken. Beide Szenen zeigen eindrucksvoll, wie tief die Vorurteile im einfachen Volk verwurzelt sind, und es wird deutlich, wie in einer solchen Gesellschaft die Verfolgungen ungestört weiter gehen können.¹¹

Die Verleumldung durch das Volk wird in *Andorra* und in den Evangelien sehr ähnlich beschrieben. Nachdem die Vorurteile einmal in die Welt gesetzt sind und dort so weit verbreitet vorliegen, daß nicht einmal die Wahrheit gegen sie ankommen kann, ist es nicht verwunderlich, daß sich auch Menschen finden lassen, die vor einer Verleumldung des Opfers nicht zurückschrecken. Daß der zum Außenseiter Herabqualifizierte keinen Platz in dieser Gesellschaft hat, wird wörtlich genommen und man versucht einen Grund zu finden, ihn töten lassen zu können. In *Andorra* ist es der Steinwurf gegen Andris leibliche Mutter, den man ihm in die Schuhe schiebt, um ihn dann zu verhaften und den Schwarzen ausliefern zu können.¹² Der Wirt, der den Stein selber geworfen hat, tritt als falscher Zeuge auf, denn er habe es "mit eigenen Augen gesehen." (88) Genauso kommen Verhaftung und Hinrichtung Jesu über den Versuch zustande, falsche Zeugenaussagen zu finden. "Die Hohenpriester aber und der ganze Hohe Rat suchten falsches Zeugnis gegen Jesus, daß sie ihn töteten." (Mt 26,59) Als die von ihnen gefundenen falschen Zeugen Jesus nicht genügend belasten können, verleumden sie ihn selber bei Pilatus mit dem Argument, daß Jesus nur gekommen sei, das Volk aufzuwiegeln und die römische Machtstellung zu gefährden. In beiden Texten sind es also die

Vertreter des Volkes, die eine Verleumdung vorbringen und den angeblich Schuldigen daraufhin verhaften. Dann übergeben sie diesen jedoch an die gegenwärtige Besatzungsmacht ihres Landes, die dann die eigentliche Hinrichtung ausführen wird.

Ein wichtiges Thema in *Andorra* und in den Evangelien ist das Verleugnen und der Verrat an der verfolgten Person. Diese Sünde eines Mitmenschen wird in der Bibel bekannterweise besonders anschaulich durch das Krähen eines Hahns demonstriert. Jesus hat Petrus vorausgesagt, daß dieser ihn in der Nacht der Gefangennahme durch die Hohenpriester dreimal verleugnen würde: "In dieser Nacht, ehe der Hahn kräht, wirst du mich dreimal verleugnen." (Mt 26,34) Auch in *Andorra* krähen die Hähne gemäß Regieanweisung genau dreimal am Ende der Nacht, als der Lehrer endlich mit Andri darüber zu reden versucht, daß dieser in Wirklichkeit sein Sohn ist (55). Bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt hat der Lehrer mindestens dreimal diese Tatsache verleugnet.¹³ Er hat es seiner Frau nicht gesagt, er hat es den Andorranern verschwiegen, und er versucht es erst in dieser Nacht, es Andri selber zu sagen. Bevor er jedoch dazu kommt, die Wahrheit deutlich zu formulieren, krähen die Hähne zum dritten Mal und die Verleugnung ist vollendet. Die durch den Hahnschrei weithin wahrnehmbare Ankündigung, daß ein Mensch von einem anderen verleugnet wurde, ist ein besonders anschauliches Beispiel dafür, wie Max Frisch in *Andorra* ein Motiv aus der Leidensgeschichte Jesu verwendet, um einen Aspekt seines Dramas zu verdeutlichen.¹⁴ Ähnliches erreicht er auch durch den Selbstmord des Lehrers. Durch dessen Lüge über die wahre Identität Andris wurden die Vorurteile in die Welt gesetzt, er wurde gemieden, verfolgt, verleumdet und getötet. Die Frau des Lehrers sagt dies deutlich: "Du hast uns alle verraten, aber den Andri vor allem." (82) Die Kennzeichnung als Verräter wird dann auch durch die Art und Weise erreicht, wie er sich am Ende tötet. Sich seiner Schuld am Schicksal des Sohnes bewußt, erhängt sich der Lehrer im Schulzimmer.¹⁵ Diese Todesart weist natürlich direkt auf den Selbstmord des Judas hin. Auch dieser drückt die Reue über seinen Verrat darin aus, daß er sich aufhängt (Mt 27,5). Die bekannten Motive von Verleugnung und Verrat in der Bibel

finden somit ihre Entsprechung im Drama und tragen ihren Teil dazu bei, die Leidensgeschichte Andris in einem größeren Sinnzusammenhang begreifen zu können.

Die innere Zerrissenheit und die äußeren Umstände der beiden Verurteilten zum Zeitpunkt der Verhaftung ist ebenfalls sehr ähnlich beschrieben. Beide wissen, daß sie sterben müssen und beide wollen sterben. Ihnen gemeinsam ist die Angst vor dem Tod und dennoch fügen sie sich in das aus ihrer Sicht unausbleibliche Schicksal. Am Ende wünschen beide, daß es schnell geschehe.¹⁶ Andri sagt dies in seinem Gespräch mit dem Pater, bevor die falsche Anschuldigung über den Steinwurf überhaupt vorgebracht ist. Er kündigt seinen bevorstehenden Tod an und "möchte, daß es bald geschehe." (87) Daß dieser Wunsch allerdings einer aufgezwungenen Unausweichlichkeit und nicht einem freiwilligen Entschluß entspringt, zeigt die Ehrlichkeit seiner Angst: "Aber mir graut vor dem Sterben." (87) Sehr ähnlich werden die inneren Widersprüche von Jesus beschrieben. Nachdem er ebenfalls seinen Tod mehrfach angekündigt hat, sagt er zu Judas vor dessen Verrat: "Was du tust, das tue bald." (Joh 13,27) Auch er zeigt dann seine menschliche Angst vor dem Sterben, als er beginnt "zu trauern und zu Klagen." (Mt 26,37)¹⁷ Ebenso vergleichbar sind auch die äußeren Umstände der Verhaftung dargestellt. Andri wacht in der Nacht, in der es geschehen wird, zusammen mit Barblin, der einzigen Verbündeten, die an seiner Seite bleibt, vor ihrer Kammer. Es gibt keinen Zweifel darüber, daß dies jedoch lediglich ein Warten auf die Gefangennahme ohne wirkliche Hoffnung auf eine Wendung der kommenden Ereignisse ist. Genauso wacht Jesus in der Nacht, in der er verhaftet wird, mit seinen Jüngern an der Seite im Garten von Gethsemane. Auch er wartet lediglich auf die Verfolger, die ihn abholen werden. Vor der eigentlichen Verhaftung sind die beiden unschuldig Verurteilten jedoch nachdrücklich auf sich allein gestellt: Andri sitzt auf dem leeren Platz von Andorra: "Mutterseelenallein. Alle Läden herunter, jede Tür zu." (90) Auch die Jünger Jesu schlafen schließlich ein und wachen nicht mehr mit ihm. Die Protagonisten müssen den letzten Teil des ihnen vorbestimmten Weges alleine gehen. In ihrem Innern

regen sich gleichzeitig Angst, Zweifel und die Überzeugung, daß es keinen Ausweg mehr gibt. Beide lassen sich dann in der Nacht ohne Gegenwehr in Haft nehmen.¹⁸

Nach der Verhaftung, als die Handlung offensichtlich auf den unausweichlichen Tod hinausläuft, gibt es jedoch in beiden Texten noch einmal zumindest zwei deutliche Einschnitte, die ein anderes Ende möglich erscheinen lassen. In *Andorra* hat der Lehrer endlich die Wahrheit über Andris Herkunft gesagt und das Volk hätte nun die Möglichkeit, seine Vorurteile über den angeblichen "Jud" als unbegründet zu widerrufen. Genauso birgt die "Judenschau" ein Element der denkbaren Wendung, denn durch die Vermummung aller Andorraner könnte immerhin auch ein anderer oder gar niemand vom "Judenschauer" ausgewählt werden. Nach der Verhaftung von Jesus sind ebenfalls zwei Handlungsalternativen erkennbar. Zuerst kann Pilatus, der über ihn richten soll, keine Schuld an ihm finden und will ihn befreien, dann bietet er nach dem Einspruch der Ankläger kurz darauf nochmals eine Auswahl an, die nicht mehr der Schuldfrage, sondern einer alten Tradition nachgeht: er fragt das Volk, ob ihnen Jesus oder Barabbas freigegeben werden soll.¹⁹ In beiden Texten ändern diese möglichen Alternativen erwartungsgemäß nichts am tragischen Ausgang. Im Drama und in der Bibel ist es zudem eindeutig das Volk, das den Weg für die endgültige Hinrichtung ebnet. In *Andorra* wird bei der "Judenschau" vor allem durch den andorranischen Soldaten dafür gesorgt, daß die Wahl auf Andri fällt,²⁰ im Neuen Testament wählt das von den jüdischen Hohenpriestern aufgewiegelte Volk die Freigabe von Barabbas.

In beiden Schriften wird der Verurteilte von seinen Mördern vor der eigentlichen Hinrichtung durch Prügel, Verspottung und Folterung zusätzlich gedemütigt. Andri wird noch in Gegenwart der Señora von seinen Gegnern feige mißhandelt. "Die vier Soldaten und der Geselle versetzten ihm Fußtritte von allen Seiten." (74) Auch in der Bibel widerfährt Jesus Ähnliches, als er nach seiner Gefangennahme von einer Gruppe geschlagen wird, in der ebenfalls die Gehilfen gesondert genannt werden: "Da fingen einige an, ihn

anzuspeien und sein Angesicht zu verdecken und ihn mit Fäusten zu schlagen [...]. Und die Knechte schlugen ihn ins Angesicht.” (Mk 14,69) Auch die Verhöhnungen Andris durch das Volk–als deren typische Vertreter vor allem durch den Soldaten und den Tischler–finden sich in ähnlicher Form bei der Verspottung von Jesus durch die Soldaten, die ihm dann vor der Hinrichtung ein Purpurgewand anlegen und eine Dornenkrone aufsetzen. Diese ist bereits Zeichen der nun folgenden körperlichen Mißhandlungen, die mit dem Schlagen ans Kreuz und dem Reichen des Essigtranks fortgesetzt werden. In *Andorra* ist das Abschlagen des Fingers durch die Soldaten nicht nur ebenso unnötig und gewalttätig, die Wegnahme des Rings, dem einzigen Wertvollen, was Andri noch am Körper trägt, ist darüber hinaus eine Parallel zum Stehlen der Kleider Jesu, um die die Soldaten das Los werfen. Nicht nur die offensichtliche Analogie eines Todes am Pfahl und am Kreuz ist also bemerkenswert, auch die der eigentlichen Hinrichtung vorausgehenden und den Mord damit umso grausamer machenden Demütigungen sind in beiden Texten zu finden.

Nach dem Tod von Andri und Jesus übernehmen die weiblichen Figuren aus ihrem brutal verkürzten Leben die weitere Handlung. In *Andorra* ist es nur Barblin, die um Andri trauert, während das Leben für die anderen Menschen scheinbar unbeeindruckt weitergeht. Auch im Neuen Testament ist es vor allem Maria von Magdala, die den Leichnam Jesu beweint und ihn versorgen will.²¹ So sind es auch Barblin und Maria, die sich nach dem Verbleib des Toten erkundigen. Barblins Frage “Wo hast du meinen Bruder hingebracht?” (125) ist weniger mit der Frage Gottes an Kain zu vergleichen (1.Mos 4,9), wie es in Interpretationen des Dramas immer wieder geschieht, sondern viel sinnvoller mit der Bitte Marias “Herr, hast du ihn weggetragen, so sage mir, wo du ihn hingelegt hast.” (Joh 20,15) Beide Frauen kümmern sich weiterhin um die Toten, auch nachdem diese die Welt verlassen haben, und deshalb sind sie es auch, durch die das Motiv der Auferstehung angekündigt wird. Während im Neuen Testament Jesus zuerst der Maria erscheint, ihr seine Auferstehung offenbart und sie auserwählt, diese Nachricht zu verbreiten, ist es im Drama

Barblin, die an eine Wiederkehr von Andri glaubt: "Hier sind seine Schuh. Röhrt sie nicht an! Wenn er wiederkommt, das hier sind seine Schuh." (127) In beiden Texten sind ausdrücklich die Frauen Träger der Hoffnung auf eine positive Folge aus dem Tod des Hingerichteten.

Beide Lebensbeschreibungen enden nicht mit dem Sterben des Hingerichteten, sondern zeigen in einem kurzen Nachspiel, wie der Tote und sein Tod in die Zukunft hinein wirken sollen. Für die Menschen, die zurückbleiben, soll dies der Beginn der Lehren aus diesem Tod sein. In *Andorra* übernimmt Barblin die Aufgabe, das Andenken und die Erinnerung an Andri wach zu erhalten, damit die Menschen—das sind die Zuschauer—aus seinem Tod lernen. Dieses Erbe steht ihr auch deshalb zu, weil sie nach dem Tod des Lehrers, der Señora und Andris die einzige echte Verwandte Andris ist, die zurückbleibt. Damit befindet sie sich in derselben Rolle wie die Jünger Jesu, die nach dessen Weggang von dieser Welt seine Botschaft weiter verbreiten sollten. Auch sie hatte Jesus als "wahre Verwandte" (Mk 3, 31-35) bezeichnet. In beiden Texten wird durch das Nachspiel die Bedeutung des Toten für die Zukunft verdeutlicht und die Forderung gestellt, daß der Gestorbene nicht vergessen werden darf, damit sein Tod einen Sinn erhält.

Barblin hat das erste Wort und das letzte Wort in *Andorra*. Was sie im Drama sagt, ist also bedeutsam und muß ernst genommen werden. Durch sie stellt Max Frisch die Verbindung von *Andorra* und der Passion am Deutlichsten her. Er läßt sie ganz am Anfang auf den Märtyrertod Andris hinweisen und übergibt es am Ende an sie, diesen Tod nicht vergessen zu lassen. So wie Jesus und seine Lehren weiterleben durch die Überlieferung der Lebens- und Leidensgeschichte in der Bibel, leben auch Andri und die Erinnerung an die Schuld, die an ihm begangen wurde, durch das Drama weiter. Durch die vielen und durchgängig verwendeten Parallelen mit der Passion, die Max Frisch in sein Drama eingebaut hat, erhält die Lebens- und Leidensgeschichte Andris eine Bedeutsamkeit, die über den Einzelfall eines von Vorurteilen Verfolgten weit hinausgeht. Am Ende des Dramas ist dann „*Andorra*“ nicht nur allgegenwärtig und

„Andri“ nicht nur überall, sondern viel zutreffender: Er ist – wie Jesus – auch in uns allen und ständig unter uns.

Notes

1. Vgl. Die Sammlung von Kritiken und Aufsätzen besonders in Bänzinger, Knapp und Schau.

2. Vgl. Frühwald/Schmitz, S.63/64; Eckhart, S.50; Gockel, S. 96/97; Schröder, S.100. Über eine kurze Bemerkung, daß es solche Parallelen gibt, geht jedoch keine dieser mir vorliegenden Arbeiten hinaus. Ausführlicher zum allgemeinen Thema über das Religiöse im Werk Max Frischs vgl. Schröder, S. 95-103.

Den ersten Hinweis auf eine beabsichtigte Parallele zwischen dem Stück und der Passion findet man schon in der Tagebuchskizze: „Die Andorraner aber, sooft sie in den Spiegel blickten, sahen mit Entsetzen, daß sie selber die Züge des Judas tragen, jeder von Ihnen.“ (Max Frisch, *Tagebuch 1946-1949*, S.37). Nach der einfachen Formal: Andorraner=Judas, Judas=Verräter Jesu, Andorraner=Verräter Andri, also Andri=Jesus lässt sich diese Beziehung leicht herstellen.

3. Es soll hierbei nicht um eine theologisch fundierte Interpretation von *Andorra* gehen, oder gar um eine säkularisierte Auslegung der Bibel (ich selber habe zur Vorbereitung auf diese Arbeit die Evangelien zum ersten Mal vollständig gelesen). Ziel ist hier lediglich das Aufzeigen von Parallelen in beiden Texten und die mögliche Bedeutung für den Gesamteindruck des Dramas. Meine Arbeit soll darüber hinaus auch Anregung sein können, auf dem hier eingeschlagenen Pfad evtl. weitere Interpretationsansätze für *Andorra* zu finden. Einige der folgenden Endnoten beinhalten deshalb Gedanken, zu denen eine weitere Untersuchung sinnvoll sein könnte, die aber im Rahmen dieser Arbeit nicht näher betrachtet werden konnten.

Neben den inhaltlichen Parallelen, auf die sich der vorliegende Aufsatz beschränkt, gibt es natürlich auch strukturelle und sprachliche Verbindungen zwischen dem Drama und der Passion. Besonders in einigen Monologen Andris hat Frisch über dessen bild- und gleichnishaft Sprache hinaus einen bibelähnlichen Satzbau angestrebt (vgl. Frühwald, S.140; Wendt, S.125)

4. Daß das, was im Drama geschieht, nicht zum ersten Mal passiert, daß die Verfolgung und Tötung eines Menschen aus Vorurteilen und Angst vor dem "Anderen" so alt ist, wie das Menschengeschlecht selber, sagt Andri am Ende selber: "Was kommt, das ist ja alles schon geschehen." (100) Oder noch deutlicher bereits davor: "Ich bin nicht der erste, der verloren ist. [...] Ich weiß, wer meine Vorfahren sind. Tausende und Hunderttausende sind gestorben am Pfahl, ihr Schicksal ist mein Schicksal." (95) Einer dieser Vorangegangen ist auch Jesus, dessen Leidensgeschichte den meisten Zuschauern und Lesern des Dramas geläufig ist.

5. Zur Beziehung und Verfolgung von Juden und Martyrertum vgl Alan Adelson und Robert Lepides: "The belief holds that Jews killed in a time of persecution are martyrs to God." (xiii)

6. Zahlen in Klammern bezeichnen die Seitenzahl in der hier bibliographierten Ausgabe *Andorra* von Max Frisch.

7. Zahlen in Klammern mit biblischen Hinweis bezeichnen die Stellen in den Evangelien in *Die Bibel*. In dem vorliegenden Aufsatz werden die Begriffe Bibel, Neues Testament und Passion synonym verwendet. Gemeint ist immer die Geschichte Jesu, wie sich nach Luthers Übersetzung in den vier Evangelien berichtet wird.

8. Aufgrund der Lüge des Lehrers glauben die Andorraner, daß Andri ein jüdisches Findelkind ist. In den meisten Interpretationen und im Drama selbst wird Andri dann in Wahrheit als Andorraner bezeichnet, wie alle die, die ihn verfolgen. Diese Ansicht übersieht völlig, daß seine leibliche Mutter eine "Schwarze" ist.

9. Es ist auffällig, daß die leiblichen Mütter im Leben ihrer Söhne keine entscheidende Rolle spielen. Die Señora hat ihren Sohn seit seiner Geburt nicht mehr gesehen, die Rolle der Mutter Jesu nach seiner Geburt ist in den Evangelien ebenfalls auf nur wenige Nennungen beschränkt.

10. Die Wortwahl des "warum hast du mich verraten?" (73), mit dem Andri den Gesellen später zur Rechenschaft ziehen will, erinnert an die Worte Jesu am Kreuz "warum hast du mich verlassen?" (Mt 27, 46)

11. Auch wie der Versuch, die Wahrheit zu sagen, in beiden Texten auf den Unglauben des Volkes trifft, wird ähnlich beschrieben. Der Lehrer zweifelt daran, daß man ihm glauben wird: "Und wenn sie die Wahrheit nicht wollen?" (78) Ebenso resignierend sind die Worte Jesu: "Wenn ich aber die Wahrheit sage, warum glaubt ihr mir nicht?" (Joh 8, 46)

12. Die drohende Steinigung der Ehebrecherin konnte durch die Anwesenheit Jesu verhindert werden. Die Señora hat Andri ausdrücklich

gebeten, sie nicht zu begleiten. Er war deshalb nicht anwesend, um schützend eingreifen zu können, und sie wurde durch den Steinwurf getötet.

13. Vgl. Eckart, S.50.

14. Auch der Verräterkuß des Judas, mit dem er Jesus schließlich ausliefert, ist im Drama zu finden. Hier ist es jedoch die Señora, die Andri plötzlich küßt. "Warum küssen Sie mich?" (81) fragt Andri überrascht, weil er noch nicht weiß, daß sie seine wirkliche Mutter ist. Durch die Verbindung zum Kuß des Judas wir auch die Señora als Verräterin an Andri gekennzeichnet und tatsächlich hatte sie seit seiner Geburt 20 Jahre lang keinen Kontakt zu ihm gesucht, obwohl sie genau wissen mußte, was es bedeutet, als "Jud" in "Andorra" zu leben. Außerdem kann man davon ausgehen, daß sie in dieser Zeit Andri vor "ihren" Leuten ebenfalls verleugnet hat. Interessant ist es in diesem Zusammenhang, daß wenig später Barblin den Andri *nicht* küssen will (101). Abgesehen von der zweideutigen Szenen zwischen ihr und dem Soldaten im sechsten Bild ist Barblin die einzige Figur (außer der nebenschwachen Pflegemutter), die Andri nicht verrät. Barblin ist auch die einzige, die bei der "Judenschau" versucht, Widerstand zu leisten.

15. Vgl. Auch Barblins Worte, als sie sich am Ende von den verräterischen Andorranern umgeben sieht: "warum geht ihr nicht heim, ihr alle, und hängt euch auf?" (125)

16. Es muß natürlich darauf hingewiesen werden, daß der Tod für Andri und Jesus eine sehr unterschiedliche Bedeutung hat: während Andri hoffnungslos angesichts der allgegenwärtigen Verfolgungen stirbt, stirbt Jesus hoffnungsvoll für die Läuterung der Menschen, die ihn verfolgt haben. Der sinnlose Tod Andris ist dann noch eindeutiger ein bedauerliches Zeugnis für die Sündhaftigkeit des Menschen in unserer Welt, weil sie eben *nicht* besser geworden sind und damit auch der Tod Jesu ein Element von Sinnlosigkeit enthält.

17. Der halbherzigen Bitte Jesu, daß es nicht zu seinem Tod kommen möge (Mt 26, 39: "Mein Vater, ist's möglich, so gehe dieser Kelch an mir vorüber; doch nicht wie ich will, sondern wie du willst!") entspricht der nicht verwirklichte Wunsch Andris das Kommende abzuwenden, indem er aus Andorra flüchtet (84).

18. Eine gewisse Parallelität kann man auch in der letzten Szene erkennen, in der die ganze Familie des Lehrers beieinander sitzt (4. Bild). Es handelt sich hierbei um ein Abendmahl, wie jenes, das Jesus mit seinen

Jüngern hält, bevor er verhaftet wird. Das Abendmahl ist in beiden Texten die letzte gemeinsame Mahlzeit. Auch die beschwichtigenden Worte, die der Lehrer dabei über sein Volk sagt: "Sie wissen ja nicht, was sie reden" (44), erinnern stark an Jesus' eigene Worte über seine Mörder: "Denn sie wissen nicht, was sie tun." (Lk 23, 24)

19. Das wohlbekannte Händewaschen des Pilatus mit den Worten "ich bin unschuldig an seinem Blut" (Mt 27, 24) findet natürlich seine Entsprechung in den "Zeugenaussagen" der Andorraner, die alle–bis auf den Pater–ihre Hände in Unschuld waschen. Auch das Schweigen Jesu bei dem Verhör durch Pilatus (Joh 19, 10): "Redest du nicht mit mir?" entspricht dem Schweigen Andris, als der "Judenschauer" ihn untersucht und der Soldat fragt: "Warum schweigst du?" (123).

20. Vgl. S. 120f.: Der Soldat ist derjenige, der auf den dreimaligen Pfiff des "Judenschauers" in die anonyme Masse der Vermummten hinein die tatsächliche Wahl trifft, wer wohl gemeint ist. Der Soldat sagt zum Lehrer, der sich das Tuch sofort abnimmt: "Nicht Sie, der dort, der andere!" Dieser andere ist Andri.

21. Es gibt Interpretationen der Lebensgeschichte Jesu, daß Maria von Magdala, die von ihm geheilt wurde, Jesus besonders stark geliebt hat. Auch Barblin ist die einzige weibliche Figur im Drama, die als "Geliebte" Andris bezeichnet werden könnte. Es sind also die nahestehendsten weiblichen Figuren im Leben der Männer, die auch nach ihrem Tod zu ihnen halten und sich um sie kümmern.

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The Narrative of Apocalypse: Mathias Horx' *Es geht voran. Ein Ernstfall-Roman* and Günter Grass' *Die Rättin*

Corina Petrescu

At the beginning of the eighth decade of the twentieth century the predominant mood in West German society was one of fear and apprehension with respect to a possible nuclear conflict between the two superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union. This mood determined the existence of the two German states. The controversial American-Soviet negotiations over the stationing of missiles in Central Europe put the GDR and the FRG face to face with the cruelest policy of the Cold War era: deterrence for the sake of peace. In the Federal Republic the failure of the SALT II agreement, reciprocal threats between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the decision of the national government to allow the stationing of American missiles on home ground, combined with a feeling of unrest, shaped the atmosphere of the time.

Through a discussion of Mathias Horx' novel *Es geht voran. Ein Ernstfall-Roman* and Günter Grass' *Die Rättin* I will analyze the way in which this fear of nuclear destruction was mirrored in contemporary literature. I will discuss the manner in which Horx and Grass depict the dominant doomsday mood in order to demonstrate that in the early 1980's the West German outlook upon the future was a fatalistic one.

In doing so, I hope to show that the dominant mentality of the early 1980s in the Federal Republic of Germany was, as Lifton and

Markusen say, a “genocidal”¹ one. I will begin with an analysis of how, after the construction of the nuclear bomb by J.R. Oppenheimer, a sensitivity for the impending nuclear catastrophe developed among the physicists, which after the use of the bomb on Japan, found its resonance in the minds of the average citizen. Furthermore, intensity of this feeling among the population was due to the main policy of the Cold War—nuclear deterrence. Insisting on the fact that they increase their nuclear arsenal only in order to be prepared in the case of an attack by the other side, both the United States and the Soviet Union triggered a fear of heightened paranoia. In this game of power, Germany was caught in the middle because of its division between the former allies of World War II.

My argument will proceed in two steps: First, I will historically contextualize the rise of the nuclear and genocidal mentality in *Historical Contextualization: The Birth of the Genocidal Mentality*. In the second part, *The Narrative of Apocalypse in Mathias Horx and Günter Grass*, I will discuss the dominant doomsday mood in two literary texts of the time, one of which was written by a canonical author and the other by someone younger who belonged to the subculture, in order to demonstrate that subcultural and mainstream literature alike participated in the same discourse formation in the Foucauldian sense.² As my analysis will demonstrate, the genocidal mood in the West German society was one of fear and apprehension in light of the danger of self-destruction by even a limited nuclear war between the superpowers. By voluntarily continuing to produce nuclear weapons, despite its knowledge of the exterminatory character of this kind of armament, humanity showed that life itself was no longer its top priority. For those in power, these weapons meant gaining even more power, for the rest, it was living permanently with the knowledge that the future was marked by uncertainty, and that it was other fallible humans who bore the responsibility for this situation. Hence, a genocidal mentality was born and the artistic texts, which I have chosen, constitute representations of this mentality, thus participating in developing a genocidal discourse. This part will constitute the primary body of my analysis and will attempt to show the way in which these sources articulate the nuclear mentality.

Through an analysis of the ways in which representatives of different cultural levels—"high" culture and "low"/popular culture—reacted to this social and political anxiety, I hope to convince the reader of the centrality of this issue in the Federal Republic of Germany at the beginning of the early 1980s.

Historical Contextualization: The Birth of the Nuclear Mentality

As Lifton and Markusen indicate, when the construction of the atomic bomb was first considered, many military and political leaders regarded it as another, more efficient, means to confront an enemy that had proven unbeatable through other means. Therefore, even originally, the atomic bomb had a deterring character, since it was meant to stop the war in the Pacific and bring peace. However, the bomb was obviously also expected to increase American supremacy and assure its dominance on the international scene at any cost. At the same time, there was a scientific curiosity on the part of the physicists who worked to make the bomb. Nevertheless, their enthusiasm was sometimes tempered by the possibility of an uncontrollable weapon. Therefore, some of the physicists showed early signs of apprehension vis-à-vis the actual use of the device.

Yet political interests were the determining factors that lead to the making and use of the bomb. Even more amazing is the fact that after the catastrophic consequences of Hiroshima, some political leaders continued to view the bomb as merely another weapon, totally ignoring that the first mass extermination device had been built³. Thus Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not only the birthplaces of the atomic age, but also of the nuclear, and hence, the genocidal mentality. After this moment, humankind had to start living with the knowledge that it had created the means of its own extermination. Everyone knew what the new weapon was capable of, and no one could deny anymore that man's power of destruction had become unlimited. Hence, aware of this, a stronger opposition among the physicists surfaced when the idea of making the hydrogen bomb was

launched by Edward Teller. In his report to the Atomic Energy Commission of October 30th, 1949, J.R. Oppenheimer, the father of the atomic bomb, advised against this step, pointing out that the use of the weapon “would involve the decision to slaughter a vast number of civilians” so that “a super bomb [the hydrogen bomb] might become a weapon of genocide.”⁴ Nevertheless, at that time the Cold War was still too hot for the decision makers to take into consideration such scrupulous attitudes. In their relations with the Soviet Union, American leaders remembered too well such instances as the Greek civil war, the coup in Czechoslovakia, the Berlin crisis, and the communist take over of China⁵. They identified evil with the Soviet Union and its leader as a new dictator. This distrust and awe grew even more when in 1949 the United States lost their position as soul owner of nuclear weapons. Old fears intensified and new ones arose leading to an even tenser international situation, as one began to develop policies meant to enforce the status quo. The most famous is undoubtedly the policy of deterrence, in which both the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a race for military supremacy in the world. Reciprocal threats were made under the pretext of guarding peace. ‘More weapons for a safer world’ could easily have been the slogan of those days, and neither the Americans nor the Soviets failed to use it. This situation reached its peak at the beginning of the 1980s, when the tensions between the two attained their limits, and immanence of a nuclear conflict was part of everyday reality.

The next part of this discussion analyzes the role, which was played by West Germany in the context of this nuclear crisis. After WW II West Germany's main concern was with its political and economical reconstruction. The political agenda of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer tried to establish a democracy based on a parliamentary order, a capitalist economy assuring general welfare, and a foreign policy aspiring for integration into Western structures. As Alice Holmes Cooper highlights, these objectives “constituted a political and policy package” so that “opposition to one pillar of the package (Western military integration—or specifically, rearmament and nuclear weapons) was part of, and a vehicle for, opposition to the

Adenauer era more broadly.”⁶ This outlook upon the situation offers the explanation for the weakness of the protest movement in the 1950s in West Germany, despite the fact that not the entire population agreed to all the decisions taken by the Adenauer administration.⁷ However having assured political stability through the new parliamentary order and economic prosperity, the administration enjoyed sufficient popularity among the masses. Therefore, when international political decisions were taken, a majority tended to consider them as another step toward a better future, which after the war was everyone’s wish. So when West Germany joined NATO in 1955 and started again developing its own army, or when in 1958 the Parliament voted to station American tactical weapons on German soil, the decisions were, as Alice Cooper Holmes formulates it, “hotly debated,”⁸ but they all came through. Both nationally and internationally there were interests, which were more important than the considerations of the first domestic voices arising against such decisions.

On the international level, the Cold War made West Germany’s rearment appear essential to America’s containment policy in Europe; while, nationally, closer relations to the West encouraged the country in its race for a liberal-democratic social order, and provided the key to a Western support in the case of an attack on the side of the Soviet Union. Viewed from this perspective the two major political decisions of the fifth decade—rearmament and nuclear weapons on West German soil—appear, if not correct from an ethical point of view, at least historically and socially explainable. Having lived through WW II the majority of the West Germans were more interested in gaining a feeling of domestic and personal security, than considering ethical questions through which these were achieved. As Cooper Holmes demonstrates, “despite apparent possibilities for a new society, the human toll of the Third Reich, the war, and the immediate postwar years served to depoliticize society, as people turned to reconstructing family and personal life. (...) [There was] this desire for a return to normalcy, for peace and quiet, and for a *heile Welt*, a world of safety and succor. Return to normalcy often meant a resurgence of traditional conservatism and a return to

private life after the mass mobilization of the Third Reich.”⁹ Therefore, if Adenauer’s political decisions catalyzed the peace movement of the 1950s, this turn of the population to the personal sphere made its role to be of little significance at that time.

In the 1960s, the conditions for the peace movement changed considerably, although it still limited the peace protests. Despite the fact that protest in general was much more an issue now than it had been a decade earlier, especially the peace movement did not gain much ground. The development of different ideological trends and an extraparliamentary opposition, which had a strong organizational foundation, favored a rebirth of political awareness, but without relating it directly to issues of peace. The student movement of the 1960s was trying to oppose too many things at one time in order to be able to fulfill any of its goals. Their protest against the Vietnam War was rather an accusation brought to the imperialistic tendencies of the United States than a plea for general and especially nuclear disarming.

The same lack of focus could be observed in the 1970s protest. No prominent weapon decisions were taken during this time so that many of the points of the peace movement appeared unmotivated. Even more, as Alice Holmes Cooper also suggests, they were actually integrated and institutionalized into mainstream politics or governmental policies as a result of the actions of the generation of 1968. The 1970s stand out as the time of the *Ostverträge* when West German and East European relations made visible advancement, and there were no major tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The spark that once again ignited the fire of protests was the neutron bomb and NATO’s double-track decision of 1979. Suddenly, West Germans found their national security threatened. The 1970s had established détente, arms control, and *Ostpolitik* as premises for East-West relations. The new missile decision came to symbolize dangers to all of these achievements, especially since the Afghanistan crisis called into discussion a stagnation of the arm control agreements. Hence, fear of another war loomed over West Germany and all of Europe. According to a public opinion poll, in October

1981 67% of the West Germans thought that peace in Europe had become less secure in the past year.¹⁰

Another reason for the increase in credibility of the peace movements' messages was the decrease of confidence in the friendship between West Germany and the United States after 1968. Whereas in the 1950s the United States had been viewed as a friend and protector, some West Germans came to regard American policies as a threat to their country. This happened especially when the talks around the actual use of the weapons became the main issue on the international level. Many West Germans might have been in favor of nuclear deterrence, but not of the actual use of the weapons, especially since the Pentagon's plans included a preventive nuclear strike on the German-German border, due to the Republic's position as America's most important zone of influence in Europe.

All these reasons combined determined not only the reoccurrence of the peace movement, but also their ascent to national politics. Being the only movement opposing the double-track decision until the rise of the Green Party in 1983, I agree with Alice Holmes Cooper that the peace movement enjoyed a "virtual monopoly,"¹¹ which propelled it as the focus of political attention. Furthermore, it was the emphasis on the particular dangers that affected the German territory—seen as East and West Germany—that gave the movement such importance. Since it was divided between the two superpowers and each of them concentrated nuclear arsenal in its share, Germany was like a powder-keg ready to explode whenever one of the combatants, accidentally or intentionally, pushed the button. It was the goal of the peace movement to create an awareness of this fact in the minds of the West German population, and thus lead it to taking action against this situation. Being itself a counter-movement, it chose to express its ideas mainly through subcultural¹² manifestations, and it articulated these ideas specifically through the punk subculture.¹³ In their style and music, the Neue Deutsche Welle (NDW), they epitomized the nuclear terror, which had lead to the rise of the genocidal mentality, as they expressed emptiness, alienation and distrust in anyone who was

outside their community. Their stand was not politically critical, but merely a warning against the nuclear genocide.

The Narrative of Apocalypse in Mathias Horx and Günter Grass

'Unrest' is also the feeling one experiences during the reading of Mathias Horx' novel *Es geht voran. Ein Ernstfall-Roman*. The book was published 1982 at a time when, as I have shown earlier in this paper, the West German public was paralyzed by the fear of the imminent nuclear catastrophe. The protagonist, whose name is never revealed, lives in the *Freilandzone*¹⁴ with his girlfriend, Joel. They are not members of any of the existing political organizations and seem not to care about anything, since the psychological terror of the coming end is the only reality they know. As a means of protection, the protagonist carries in his pocket a pill that would cause a quick and painless death, if need be.

One day he meets an older acquaintance who tells him about an organization, Phoenix, which helps people psychologically prepare themselves for the confrontation with the reality of the final end. Joel and he join this organization, go through the training, and afterwards are sent together with two other couples in a zone where they have to prepare a bunker as their shelter during the war. Despite the problems that appear among them, they succeed in both arranging the bunker and surviving the catastrophe. After the war, four of them including Joel and the first person narrator, go in search of a place to establish a new settlement and start a 'normal' life. During their trip, an old lady in a village drugs them, they are captured by a militaristic organization and taken into a camp, which bears strong resemblance with the nazi work camps. However, Pißnelke, the same person who had told them about Phoenix, and his gang saves them. After they regain their freedom they decide to form a community. The attempt of the four to bring the other two members of their group from the bunker to this new community fails, so they settle in with Pißnelke and start working the soil for their daily needs of food.

Three years pass, and one day a team from the Phoenix organization comes and offers a deal: They should plant sugar beets for the organization and in exchange the community would receive medical assistance from it. However, the community decides to decline the offer, but when the protagonist's son falls sick, he takes him to the nearest hospital of the Phoenix. Here, he is given medical support for the child in exchange for his promise to cultivate beets. The personal decision, which goes against the general agreement, comes in conflict with that of the community, and after his argument with Pißnelke, Joel and he together with their child are isolated. They face hard times when they run out of supplies of tea, coffee, soup, and other goods, which they cannot produce themselves. The last stroke comes when the rest of the community and they are robbed by "Uniformen Zombi"—members of military groups, which are in charge of the security in the factories still existing in the big cities. They are the representatives of the old technological mentality of the pre-war industrial world. People from other communities come in order to fight these predators and the protagonist joins them. The last images are those of the war, which—as we are told in the epilogue—is won by the villagers. Afterwards humankind returns to an existence without wars, but not necessarily safe for eternal peace, since the characters are preoccupied with the recreation of technology and big cities. Hence, if at a certain moment the author permitted a utopian spark to rise and give hope for a new future, the ending proves its impossibility. Since civilization is recreated on the patterns of the old world, humankind's new destiny will probably repeat its history.

Starting with the title of the book and those of the different chapters—*Keine Atempause*, *Zellteilung*, *Trautes Heim*, *Großes Licht*, *Deutscher Frühling*—the novel quotes the rhetoric of the scream of despair vis-à-vis the dangers of the nuclear age: "Ernstfall!" However not only these titles, but also the structure of the novel hints at the fact that this is indeed the main theme of this book. It is divided in two books: *Erstes Buch* dealing with the time before the war, the actual nuclear catastrophe, and the time immediate after that, and *Zweites Buch*, concentrating on the reality three years after the end of the war.

Book one contains five subdivisions labeled 'phases' and whose titles call to my mind the manuals of electronic devices, where one is told which steps to take in order to either start or stop that device. As such, the first book contains the technical instructions used to set the earth on fire. Furthermore, the fact that the divisions appear as 'phase I', 'phase II', etc strengthen the sense of instrumentality by adding a familiar military touch. The first book is also distinctive from the second through its literary form. It appears as a mixture of journal entries—starting June 2, 1989 and ending May 26, 1990—, publicity fliers for different groups or gangs, political interviews and sketches introduced without any obvious logic one after the other or one in the other. This configuration is another reflection of the subject of the novel. Similar to the world that is described as ruled by chaos and uncertainty, the form of the novel itself is chaotic and sometimes confusing.

The second book represents a linear narrative. Its divisions, I and II, separate the period after the war from the time before the new conflict and the rise of the warriors going to fight yet another war. Although we are aware that the narrator has not changed between book one and two it is no longer a diary account that we receive, but a retrospective story of the events from his perspective. The present tense of the journal has turned into simple past in order to stress the idea that despite its experience of the nuclear war, humankind has not learned anything, especially since the last image of the novel is that of the departing warriors. We know from the epilog that some of the characters survive this new fight and that the world is rebuilt to some extent. Nevertheless, the idea of another confrontation between humans of different opinions is much stronger than the last half page, which reassures the reader that everything went once again well for the main protagonists. My explanation for the author's turn to the traditional linear form of narrative in the second book is bound again with the reality, which the novel presents. During reconstruction there was no time for writing journals since there was work to be done. It was acceptable, however to sit and write while waiting for the world to explode, because there was no uncertainty about the immanence of that fact, but after that one had to try and

rebuild one's life. However since the protagonist does not want to loose all his experiences, he writes them down at another time when he is waiting for something: He is waiting to die his natural death. His pedagogical tone in the epilog expresses his hope that maybe humankind has learned something from the experience he underwent, so that none of the scenarios presented to him would repeat themselves.

However, one should not confound the intentions of the protagonist with those of the author. The "I" of the story might want his readers to learn something from him, but what is Horx' intention in writing his novel? What is the argument he is making? In his novel Horx expresses this fear of nuclear destruction at its peak, that is, when it had become a certitude that one did not doubt, but merely awaited: "Kann mir nicht vorstellen, daß der große Bums noch länger auf sich warten läßt—von den Leuten hier im Freiland glaubt jedenfalls keiner mehr, daß es ohne ihn ausgeht."¹⁵ Nevertheless, I believe that precisely through presenting the end as a concrete reality, Horx is trying not only to warn people, but also to shake them out of their inertia. A better way to express this is to say that Horx 'will nicht warnen, aber mahnen.'¹⁶ He does that especially in the first part of his novel by inserting political propaganda and interviews in his narrative. In this way, he implies that not communication will provide a solution for the crisis, but civil action. Only when all people are able to unite in spite of the differences that exist, will the world stand another chance. As presented in the novel, political activism is merely a form of manipulation, which embitters humans and turns them into enemies. Thus, by concentrating on these group-conflicts mankind is blind in regard to the real problem of the nuclear threat. At the end of the novel, the small village community lives undisturbed in its newly constructed environment until the first political activists appear and break the community in two. In spite of this, I doubt that one should read this passage as a gesture encouraging communitarianism. Rather, the author is trying to suggest that human brotherhood and unity will assure long lasting and beneficial relations among individuals, unlike a system centered around a political figure.

The warning character of Horx' novel is emphasized by the feeling of anxiety that dominates the lives of his characters to the same degree as it was present in the West German society of the 1980s. The flier of one of the political organizations of the pre-war society exemplifies this fear. They are called "Transformatoren" and stand for a non-violent confrontation with the endangering power authorities. As Horx presents them, they are a group trying to oppose the violence in a dying world through positive thinking and ecological training in their quest for harmony.

Du hast Angst.

Ich habe Angst.

Angst ist das Gefühl der Epoche.

Aber Angst ist ein negatives Gefühl.

Es geht auf das Konto der Apokalypse.¹⁷

Another instance that captures this fear is the monologue of the protagonist in search of the confidence-giving killer-pills, which would enable one at least the dignity of a fast and decent death, as opposed to that in a bunker: "Ich muß mal zusehen, daß ich an ein paar anständige Schnelltöterpills rankomme. Wäre ein beruhigendes Gefühl, was schnellwirkendes in der Tasche zu haben, besser jedenfalls als die Aussicht, in 'nem Massenbunker zu verröcheln."¹⁸

Viewed as such the title of the novel itself would contain a critique of human nature. It would be the same cynical position that one could hear in a song by Fehlfarben, a group of the NDW,

Keine Atempause

(...)

Berge explodieren

(...)

Es geht voran.¹⁹

and which stressed the blindness of those in power, who failed to realize that deterrence and rearmament were not going to assure

peace. Similarly in Horx' novel, humans still fought wars in order to reach peace even after a nuclear war.

Bearing in mind the cyclicity which characterizes Horx' idea of history, this constitutes his way of saying that the danger is not over yet. If mankind is able to start again developing sophisticated technological devices, who or what will make it stop before it is too late? If after a nuclear war people could fight another war, how will they refrain from starting another one and yet another, if they have the necessary technology? These are exactly the points, which Horx makes in his novel and which show how much his novel is indebted to the counterculture of the late 1970s and early 1980s. For example, the political platform of the Phoenix Organization in the novel expresses the ideas of the eco-pacifist counterculture: the development of a nuclear awareness²⁰ and the emphasis on the destructive character of over-technologized societies:

Der bevorstehende Zusammenstoß mit Nuklearwaffen steht in engem Zusammenhang mit der Grundstruktur der zivilisatorischen Komplexe. Er exekutiert eine Produktionsform, die den evolutionären Raum der Menschheit zerstört. Wir sehen, daß der Schritt in den Zusammenstoß nicht nur Resultat des bioevolutionären Fehllaufes ist, sondern zur Zeit die einzige Möglichkeit darstellt, einen Anfang zu gewährleisten.²¹

We find it clearly stated that only a society based on small structural units could function as that to which Phoenix aspired. Furthermore, we find in Phoenix' program for the reconstruction of the world after the conflict the same resistance to technology as was expressed in the platform of the ecology movement:

Jede technologische Produktion muß auf folgende Kriterien überprüft werden:

- Ist die Produktion für einen größeren Personenkreis unmittelbar überlebensnotwendig?

- b) Ist die Produktion mit Biorecyclingkreisläufen der totalen Stufe durchführbar? Falls dies nicht der Fall ist, darf eine solche Produktion nur bei Großseuchen oder der Gefahr dauerhafter Strahlenschäden in Angriff genommen werden.
- c) Ist die Produktion auf Personengruppen in Stammesgröße dezentralisierbar?²²

In many ways, Horx' novel reads like a literarized manifesto of the eco-pacifist counterculture.

Günter Grass' apocalyptic novel *Die Rättin* proves that the fear of the total destruction of human civilization was not solely in the imagination of the subculture. This novel by a canonized author also articulates popular anxieties about a possible nuclear disaster. The narrative is presented as the dream of the narrating I, but not in a linear fashion. Instead, the structure of the book can best be described as disrupted in order to mirror a conscience torn apart by the fear of the end of the world. Each different story presents one side of the I's spilt conscience and another aspect of the general apocalyptic fear. The entire narrative unfolds under the sign of this split personality—as a symbol of the un-determinism of the entire age—which combines five different stories in an attempt to explain itself and its world. These stories are the rat-story, the Damroka-story, the Matzerath-story, the forest-story, and the Malskat story.

The novel sets out with the story of the rat, which the narrator receives as a gift under his Christmas tree. This young animal becomes an interlocutor—whether real or imaginary is hard to tell—for the narrator. It takes him back into human history to the story of Noah and his arch, and forward into an uncertain pre- or post-atomic future, in which one cannot distinguish anymore between the real and the imaginary. In the same vein, the forest-story brings forward the hopeless attempt of the characters of the Grimm fairytales to save the forest from man's destructive actions. This issue of the impending ecological catastrophe is entwined with the feminist discourse represented in the story of the five women on board of the

Neue Ilsebill. Their search for a way to save the *Ostsee* from pollution leads them to an attempt at finding the lost city of Vineta, the modern lost paradise of Atlantis. Closely related to these two last stories is that of Oskar Matzerath and his journey to Poland in order to surprise his grandmother on her 107th birthday. Oskar is now the owner of the company producing the educational video about the conflict between the government and the Grimm characters. Furthermore, Oskar is directly related to the final explosion through his production of futuristic videos.

The last story, the Malskat-account, presents the trial of the painter Malskat under accusation for having falsified Gothic murals. The connection between it and the other stories is established by the figure of Oskar, who is interested in the character, and by the political implication underscoring Grass' entire narrative. All together the five stories mirror the major topics of debate at stake in the West German society of the early 1980s—nuclear fear, ecological disaster, feminism, and the tensed relations between East and West—and bring forward Grass' position on the social and political realities of that time.

Similar to Horx, Grass' novel suggests through its configuration chaos and destitution. *Die Rättin* is the nightmare of someone, who has reached the point for which the arrival of the end is a reality. As with each reality, the individual has to face it, and our narrating I seems unable to do so. Therefore, I perceive him²³ as static and, consequently, fatalistic, merely waiting for the end to come. He is not trying to find a solution or to do something that would assure him an existence after the final explosion, as Horx' characters had done. He is passive, dreaming about possible minute changes, which he already knows to be ineffective—the lobbying of the Grimm characters at the ministry, where the Grimm brothers themselves are in charge, but powerless when it comes to helping them.

At the same time, Grass' humankind as a whole seems much less aware of the danger it faces than Horx' various communities of the Freilandzone. Unless non-human representatives—such as the rat or the characters of the fairytales—give a warning, humanity is on its way to self-destruction. Grass makes this argument in two ways: He

presents history as the nightmare of the narrating I prior to the end, during which he talks to his Christmas-rat telling it stories in which the other Grassian characters appear. Secondly, he places the I in a spatial capsule and makes it rotate around the globe after the cataclysm, in a desperate attempt to establish radio connection with possible survivors.

The first sentence of the novel in which the narrator admits to being undecided about his Christmas wish suggests the absurdity of this idea. He wished for a rat, although he wanted rather inspiration for his new poem about the education of mankind; when actually he would have enjoyed writing about his Baltic sea.

Auf Weihnachten wünschte ich eine Ratte mir, hoffte ich doch auf Reizwörter für ein Gedicht, das von der Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts handelt. Eigentlich wollte ich über die See, meine baltische Pfütze schreiben; aber das Tier gewann. Mein Wunsch wurde erfüllt. Unterm Christbaum überraschte die Ratte mich.²⁴

The story of the rat brings forward a comparison between the race of the rat and the human race, in which the former is presented, at least for some time, as the superior one. We are introduced to the two ends, which the world has known, the flood and the nuclear apocalypse, and in both cases the rats have survived due to their humility and sense of the collective, as well as their ability to multiply quickly. These features combined with the fact that rats are carriers of diseases caused mankind to detest this species and consider it inferior. However, humankind appears to have been wrong in its judgments since these are the characteristics of the survivor. According to Grass, the rats possess them and mankind does not. Hence, if in the case of the first catastrophe transcendental influence could still save humanity, there is no escape the second time. Mankind is too blind in its search for absolute power over technology, nature, and life itself in order to realize the danger. If in the case of the flood it came as a punishment from God for man's

misdeeds, in the second case it is mankind itself who calls for the disaster.

The destruction comes despite all warning signals, which man stubbornly ignores in its race for power. Through the voice of the Christmas rat, Grass expresses his critique of the policy of nuclear deterrence that marked his time. In order to emphasize even more the paradox underlying this idea, he decides to give power of attorney to the beast—thus suggesting that the much-despised rat was actually the superior species—and let the rats decide upon man's destiny. The result is the same: “wir gaben die Menschen auf und machten Schluß mit ihnen, bevor sie überraschend für uns, aufs Knöpfchen hätten drücken können.”²⁵ However, Grass seems to imply that even if the rats started the destruction of the world, at least they did it consciously, not by accident, as humans would probably have done it.

Yet the superiority of the rats stops here, since after the final explosion, the surviving race of rats begins to act more and more like humans and, finally, causes its own destruction. Although the players have apparently changed, reality proves that existence is cyclical and history repeatable. Rat(man)kind does not learn from previous mistakes, so that Grass' verdict over the situation calls to mind Dante's warning at the entrance of the Inferno, with the difference that in *Die Rättin* one need not descend into other worlds. Hopelessness is the characteristic of earthy existence. Consequently, none of the solutions suggested by the narrating I for the salvation of his fellow humans prove to have any value since they cannot stop mankind's race toward self-destruction.

Since the rat-story touches upon all the elements, which Grass meant to critique in his society it justifies its position in the novel as a linking frame and central point to which all the other stories return. His account of the impossibility for human race to be saved is based, as Roehm suggests, on his awareness of man's “Streben nach Übersteigerung (...) and technische(n) Fortschritt,”²⁶ and his wish for absolute power which transpasses the borders of human existence and interferes with nature and God, which it defies.

Zwei Gene hier-, vier dorthin: wir manipulieren.

Was heißt schon Natur! Zu allem geschickt,
verbessern wir Gott.²⁷

From this base the narrator builds the other accounts into a collection of stories, which interweave in a narrative complex.²⁸ Of primary importance is the story of the five women traveling on board the Neue Ilsebill in an attempt to preserve and protect nature from being poisoned and destroyed by industrial civilization. However their action is useless, since they cannot prevent the disaster. The engagement of the women is as hopeless as the situation of the entire world of the novel. Not only can they not save the sea, but upon their arrival they also have to face the fact that their dream city Vineta is already populated by rats. Being denied shelter or protection, they die like all the other characters.

Irmgard Hunt noted that this story lies under the influence of Walter Schulz' "Ästhetik des Schwebens" according to which, as a result of the lack of security and safety experienced in the world, the dominating mood of the present epoch is negativity. However, "Alltagsbewußtsein, Selbsterhaltung und Überlebenswillen werden aber diese Negativität verdrängen und Sicherheit und Unsicherheit als wechselnde Zustände deklarieren."²⁹ The result of this swinging between despair and hope is, as the same critic suggests, the rise and fall of utopia in Grass' novel. On the one hand, he hints at the possibility of an escape from the fatality of the nuclear age just to overrule it in the next minute through his emphasis on the irreversibility of human fate in this age.

Part of this utopian character of the novel is due to Grass'³⁰ belief that only women can still function as bearers of hope since it was man's desire for power, which brought society to the edge of its existence. Hence, the protagonists, who attempt to re-establish a balance in nature, are females, as opposed to the main characters of the other stories who are male and deeply involved in the process of destruction. In this sense, he gives the five women on board the Neue Ilsebill the official task of scientific research in order to have them abandon it in favor of the unreal, utopian, search for the city Vineta.

They strive to find this lost paradise under the miraculous guidance of a flounder and a supernatural chorus of jellyfish, only to discover as they look down on the towers and steeples of the city that it has already been recolonized—by the rats. Being denied access to their dream city, their hope for survival is broken, as they realize that no escape is possible anymore, anywhere.

Nevertheless, the reaction of the women when faced with this fact lacks the dramatic touch required by the tragic seriousness of the event. They accept it as a fact, just as they had accepted the reality of the nuclear danger. Hunt identifies in this attitude “[den] Zustand der Schwebe”³¹ as defined by Schulz at the beginning of this passage, and recognizes that even in the world of fiction or dream—since we do not know for sure whether the story of the women is real or merely another fiction of the narrating I—an escape is impossible. As the first nuclear strike against Danzig vaporizes, the women and another of the I-narrator’s hopes dies out, this impossibility becomes certainty.

As stated also by Patrick O’Neill in his analysis of Grass’ book, this attempt of the women to take cover and go under “in a sunken city of the mind”³² resembles Oskar Matzerath’s habit to disappear under his grandmother’s skirts whenever he needed protection. That is also precisely where the reader finds him at the moment of the final explosion. The protagonist of the *Tin Drum* is now a flexible businessman involved in different projects of the video industry. Underlying his narrative is the story of his trip to attend his grandmother’s 107th birthday, which is the narrative device for Grass to introduce his reader to social and political issues, such as the division of the world in the two major blocks: East and West. This delivers the explanation for the tense political situation existing in Europe at the beginning of the 1980s and leading to the explosive atmosphere dominating the world. The grandmother’s birthday party constitutes the scene for an open confrontation between these two blocks, through the opposition of the relatives who come from both sides. The personal sphere is offered as a mirror for international conflicts, and just as the relatives cannot come to an agreement, neither can the two superpowers.

The party also gives Grass the opportunity to articulate another reason of dissatisfaction: the danger of irrational technological development. By making Oskar the owner of an enterprise producing videos which present the future, Grass makes his critique explicit: it is technology and man's fascination with it that will contribute to the nuclear disaster. Oskar's trip is simultaneously "a voyage into both a fictive past and a hypothetical future"³³ which prove both to be dangerous: the former because it brings into light unsolved conflicts, like the one between East and West in the Cold War era, the latter because it anticipates a future which holds nothing positive. At the height of the birthday celebrations, when past and future meet –through the reunion of the relatives from both, East and West, to watch Oskar's anticipatory video— the world comes to an end. Again in these last seconds, Oskar flees uselessly to curl up under his grandmother's skirts, which also have become an ineffective shelter.

At least this is one version of what might have happened, because for this story Grass has also another ending in which Oskar does not die, but returns from Poland in order to be taken to the hospital due to prostate problems. He leaves the East and its problems behind without any further thought—an attitude which, when seen at a political level, would denote the way in which the West treated the East during those years—and goes back to his life as an socially integrated businessman of the West. Oskar's alienation from Poland symbolizes the turning away of the West from the problems of the world surrounding it. Furthermore, Grass seems to suggest, in recklessly engaging in (birthday) celebrations the West ignores the reality of its own problems. Otherwise, how could one still celebrate knowing the nuclear danger looming around everyone's head?

Closely related to the Matzrath story is that of the Grimm fairytale characters. As owner of Post Futurum Productions Oskar supervises the production of an educational video about the situation of the forests in West Germany. Here, Grass thematizes the relationship of modern man with nature. The starting point of this account is the dying out of the forest, which in Grass is not only

important from an ecological point of view, but also has a symbolic value. It is the space of the magical, the strange, the irrational, and its disappearance would bring about the death of the entire Creation. This episode represents Grass' stand vis-à-vis the environmental and ecological policies of the Federal Republic. His point of view seems to take the reader back to the old pagan belief that the forest symbolizes life itself, and destroying it would be an act of desacralization.

How profound Grass' anger with respect to this issue is, proves his ridiculing of the demagogic of political leaders. Their pretense is presented in the speech given by the Chancellor in the artificially created 'natural' scenery of the dying forest. The truth and Grass's own feelings are expressed in Hans' words:

"Du redest mal wieder Scheiße!" ruft er dem Kanzler als Vater zu und beschwört Wirklichkeit. Man sieht Autohalden und Autoschlangen, Fabrikschorsteine in Betrieb, heißhungriege Betonmaschinen. Es wird abgeholt, planiert, betoniert. Es fällt der berüchtigte Sauere Regen. Während Baulöwen und Industriebosse an langen Tischen das sagen und bei Vieraugengesprächen genügend Tausendscheine locker in bar haben, stirbt der Wald. Er krepiert öffentlich. Zum Himmel hoch abgetötet noch aufrechte Baumleichen.³⁴

Yet, the same blindness as in the rat-story surrounds humankind, and the protest of the fairytales characters is defeated. The only survivors of the conflict between them and the federal authorities are Hänsel und Gretel, who flee once more into the woods in an attempt to reestablish the natural balance between nature and magic. The white carriage holding the Grimm brothers takes them all into the past, a past where hope and salvation are still possible. As Oskar ends his video by remarking that someone has to escape since nobody wants to live without fairytales, which is another way of saying that nobody can survive without hope, we find again Grass' embrace of utopia as the only alternative for man's existence.

However, not only the present and the future are of interest for Grass in rendering an accurate picture of the social realities of the West German society of the early 1980s. Although forty years had passed since the end of WWII, Grass still feels that there were aspects of the post-war reality, especially since they affected contemporary West Germany, which had not yet been dealt with. One of these is the story of Lothar Malskat, East Prussian painter of Gothic murals and master forger. The reason why the author introduces this documentary account³⁵—which is not the case with any of the other stories, which are pure fiction—is once more politically explainable. This episode brings into light the reality of the American-Soviet relations at the peak of the Cold War. Furthermore, it presents Germany’s—both East and West—position as the playground for the political games of the two superpowers.

In the process of the reconstruction after the end of the war, to the surprise and delight of both church authorities and art experts, the painter Malskat uncovers murals, which are supposed to go back to the heydays of Gothic art. Generally acclaimed, he becomes a hero of the community whose members voluntarily choose to overlook the signs, which prove his forgery. As O’Neill expresses it, by refusing to see Malskat’s initials on the paintings and thus acknowledge his art as false, the community proves that in the society of the 1950s “nobody wishes to acknowledge that what was so convenient as truth could be anything but truth.”³⁶

However, the narrator observes that appearances are deceptive. He sees that it is not so much Malskat who is a forger, but other highly ranked officials of the West German government of the 1950s. If Malskat chooses to draw attention upon himself and thus expose the untruthfulness of his deeds, these real falsifiers keep quiet and remain undiscovered despite the fact that everyone knew them. Grass’ allusions are to Adenauer and Ulbricht, who “chisel[ing] away”³⁷ the swastikas of the Nazi past tried to call about a general amnesia regarding this part of their and Germany’s past. Furthermore, as Mark Martin Gruettner observes, “[ihre] Fälschungen bestanden vor allem darin, sich auf die eine oder andere Seite der verschiedenen Siegermächte zu stellen, womit die Wahrheit

einer gemeinsamen deutschen Kultur aufgeteilt werden sollte.”³⁸ The results of this situation can be seen in the 1980s, when two German armies confront each other on the border of the two republics, the number of soldiers in both countries has reached a peak, and the GDR is part of the Warsaw Pact, while the FRG belongs to NATO.

The attempt of the officials to cover the past fails just as the whitewashing of Malskat’s paintings does not erase the truth of their existence. The ugly strains, which cover the walls of the cathedral stand as proofs for the forged reality of the 1950s, and as a direct accusation of the leaders.

All of Grass’ stories in this novel, taken individually or together deal with the problem of escape. As O’Neill concludes his argument about the atmosphere of doom in this novel, whether “escape from the future, escape from the present, escape from (and to) the past,”³⁹ it is always salvation that Grass is interested in and the outcome is always negative, since there is no more way out of the end-phase of the nuclear age. Hence, Grass’ novel has to be understood as a warning against the immanent nuclear danger of the early 1980s. Behind every line the reader can identify the angry remark of an individual profoundly disappointed with his fellow men. At times mocking, scolding, or shouting out desperately, Grass appears to me like a prophet of the Old Testament preaching the apocalypse to a humanity much too deaf to hear him. Grass is entirely concerned in his book with the creation of incertitude with regard to the possibility of a positive outcome, and the last sentence of the novel, “Ein schöner Traum, sagte die Rättin, bevor sie verging”,⁴⁰ seems to sustain his doubts that man will wake up from his lethargy before it is too late.

Conclusions

The previous analysis has hopefully proven that the category of the genocidal mentality best describes the mood in West Germany during the 1980s. Whether at a subcultural level or within mainstream culture, artistic manifestations of this mentality had one goal: to create awareness of the impending nuclear disaster among the people and their political leaders, so that measures would be taken before it

was too late. Regardless of the form, which they chose for their action, the people showed themselves as opponents of the official status quo and all of their manifestations conveyed the same warning: STOP!

The literary works analyzed in this paper, which focus on the genocidal mentality of the eighth decade take this problem one step further. By presenting also the possible outcome of a nuclear confrontation, they emphasize the imminence of its dangers and also the irrationality behind the policy of nuclear deterrence used by the two superpowers as justification for their actions. This race for military supremacy could only have one ending and that was the total destruction of humankind. Nevertheless, although they are also dominated by a mood of doom and awe, at first, the literary works still bear a spark of hope by attempting utopian solutions to the general crisis. Yet, the cyclical view of history in both authors proves that they have come to realize that not even a utopia is possible anymore. Having reached the stage of development, which made the genocid possible, mankind can no longer return to the innocence required by the recreation of a peaceful existence.

If in Horx' novel at a certain time post-apocalypse reconstruction is still possible through a return to the values of an ecological existence and the brotherhood of mankind, this is no longer the case in Grass' world. Here the only thing left after the final explosion is the encapsulated I narrator gravitating around the Earth. While at some time Horx still has the power to believe in mankind's ability to save and preserve itself, Grass gives humanity up from the beginning. Horx needed to see humanity embarked in a second destructive confrontation before he could give up his dream of a safe and peaceful existence. Grass, on the contrary, holds no illusions. His renunciation of mankind and the insecurity it calls for is total and uncontestable. The open ending of Grass' novel, which is a continuous floating together of ever new possible stories or variants of the already narrated ones expending into infinity emphasizes this idea. Calling it "konsequentes Weiterführen der zuvor durchhaltenen Schwebe"⁴¹ Hunt identifies in this character of permanent *perpetuum mobile* the impossibility even of the human ratio or emotion to break

through the real. At the same time as a "Politikon[s]"⁴² the novel embodies the final act of critique of a society hazardously heading open-eyed towards its death. As Grass himself was saying:

Our present makes the future questionable and in many respects unthinkable for our present produces—since we have learned above all to produce—poverty, hunger, polluted air, polluted bodies of water, forests destroyed by acid rain and deforestation, arsenals that seem to pile up of their own accord and are capable of destroying mankind many times over.⁴³

From the vantage point of the new millennium, it can be concluded that the cultural articulations analyzed here might have helped to raise awareness of the imminent nuclear genocide, even if they alone could not have saved humankind.

Notes

1. The two authors define this term as "a mind-set that includes individual and collective willingness to produce, develop, and according to certain standards of necessity, use weapons known to destroy entire human populations." (5) They justify their use of it in connection to the nuclear threat as a result of the similarities existing between concrete Nazi genocide and the potential nuclear one. Both of them relied on a strong ideology, in the first case that of racial purism, in the second that of nuclearism – "the exaggerated embrace of the weapons, and dependency on them for security, peace, and something close to salvation" (12). Both appeared as a result of a "severe historical trauma" (12), the defeat of WW I on the one hand, and the use of the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the other hand. Similarly, both worshiped science and technology, in the form of biologism with the Nazi, and of technocraticism with the nuclear strategists, just as they relied on highly qualified specialists. Lastly, both presupposed vast social involvement, which lead to the creation of forms of bureaucracy underlying the genocide (Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Markusen, *The*

Genocidal Mentality. Nazi Holocaust and Nuclear Threat. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1990).

2. From Foucault's point of view discourse formations are the conditions that determine the very existence of a discourse, in other words, the conditions, which an author has to take into consideration in order for his/her discourse to have value at the time when it is conceived.

"[...] I tried to explore scientific discourse not from the point of view of the individuals who are speaking, nor from the point of view of the formal structures of what they are saying, but from the point of view of the rules that come into play in the very existence of such discourse" (The Order of Things, XIV). Applied at a political and social level, such an analysis presupposes the study of the social and political reality of the moment in time taken into consideration. More precisely, it attempts to give answers to the questions of why and how those realities were created and/or what changed them.

3. Winston Churchill quoted in Lifton and Markusen: "To avert a vast, indefinite butchery, to bring the war to an end, to give peace to the world, to lay healing hands upon its tortured peoples by a manifestation of overwhelming power at the cost of a few explosions, seemed, after all our toils and perils, a miracle of deliverance." 25.

4. Oppenheimer quoted in Lifton and Markusen 26.

5. Leonard Pitt, *We Americans: A Topical History of the United States* (Glenview, Ill: Scott Foresman, 1986) 127.

6. Alice Holmes Cooper, *Paradoxes of Peace. German Peace Movement since 1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996) 26.

7. Opinion polls from the time show that in 1955 45% of the population was against the re-creation of the Bundeswehr –while only 44% approved of it and 15% refrained from voting. At the same time one year later, when asked if the Bundeswehr should be equipped with nuclear weapons, a majority of 49% as opposed to 32% rejected this idea. This oppositional attitude reached its peak in 1958 when 69% voted against nuclear equipment, while two years later it decreased to 49%. However this change was not due to the increase of the number of nuclear supporters – 1960, 23% – but to the number of confused and undecided citizens – 1960, 28% versus 18% in 1958 (Elisabeth Noelle und Erich Peter Neumann (Ed.), *The German Public Opinion Polls 1947-1966*. Allensbach und Bonn: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1967).

8. Holmes Cooper 29.

9. Holmes Cooper 75.
10. Holmes Cooper 157.
11. Holmes Cooper 134.

12. Dich Hebdige defines subculture as “a metaphor for potential anarchy ‘out there’”(90) and describes it in the vein of Phil Cohen as a compromise between the need to oppose the preceding generation and at the same time to maintain identification points with it. In other words, although a subculture likes to perceive itself as something new and different from the mainstream culture, it does not go against this culture. The two can easily coexist since the representatives of a subculture merely mean to show their other-ness and not to change the already existing culture through political activism. If one goes back to Hebdige’s term anarchy, it is not political anarchy that constitutes the goal of a subculture, but the articulation of a social dissent through behavior and clothing. This might lead to social anarchy, but it is one that remains harmless (Dick Hebdige, Subculture. The Meaning of Style. London: Methuen & Co.Ltd, 1979). Therefore, as Stuart Hall emphasized, subcultures define the working-class, who is still despite its external otherness “consistently structured by the dominating alternative rhythm of Saturday Night and Monday Morning” [Stuart Hall & Tony Jefferson (Ed.) Resistance through Rituals. Youth subcultures in post-war Britain. (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1976) 61].

13. Spiegel (17/1982) Punks: Musik: Punk-Rock (Sex Pistols. UK Subs) zu dem sich Pogⁿ tanzen lässt (hektische Luftsprünge auf der Stelle); Kleidung: schwarzes Leder, viele Ansteck-Buttons mit Punk-Idolen (Sid Vicious), grelle, zerrupfte, schuddelige T-shirts, Do-it-yourself-Klamotten, feste Schürstiefel; Frisur: kurzer Igelschnitt, Glatze mit Irokesen-Bürste, wild aufgerichtete Haare in grellen Farben; Drogen: vom Bier bis zum Heroin quer durch die Apotheke.

14. According to the novel itself a ghettolike structure in which different groups live under the supervision of the police and they cannot leave without their permission.

15. Horx cover.

16. By this I mean that Horx’ goal is not only to warn his contemporaries about the possible dangers of a nuclear confrontation, but to urge them to caution lest it should come to it.

17. Horx 14.
18. Horx cover.

19. Fehlfarben, „Es geht voran.“ Monarchie und Alltag (EMI/Weltrekord, 1980)

20. „Eine nukleare Auseinandersetzung, die Europa in Mitleidenschaft ziehen wird, ist nach den Erkenntnissen der hier Anwesenden bis zum Ende des Jahrzehnts zu erwarten“ (Horx 30).

21. Horx 30.

22. Horx 82.

23. Although there is no concrete textual evidence that the first person narrator is male, I perceived him as such due to the fact that we have reference in the text pertaining to his feelings for Damroka and also his connections to all the other women on the Neue Ilsebill. I have also felt encouraged in this interpretation of the Grassian character by the secondary literature, which I have consulted, and which presents the narrator as being male, white and heterosexual.

24. Grass 5.

25. Grass 169.

26. Klaus-Jürgen Roehm, *Polyphonie und Improvisation. Zur offenen Form in Günter Grass' "Die Rättin"* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1992) 21.

27. Grass 349

28. Patrick O'Neill even speaks of a “collection of latter-day grim fairy tales” [Patrick O'Neill, “Grass's Doomsday Book: Die Rättin” *Critical Essays on Günter Grass*, Ed. Patrick O'Neill (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1987) 214.

29. Irmgard Hunt, “Zur Ästhetik des Schwebens: Utopieentwurf und Utopieverwurf in Günter Grass' Die Rättin” *Monatsheft* (3/1989) 287.

30. As Hunt specifies Grass has expressed this idea in numerous interviews and talks about the nuclear danger, mainly after the publication of his novel *Der Butt*.

31. Hunt 293.

32. O'Neill 215.

33. O'Neill 216.

34. Grass 55.

35. The Malskat-story is based on a real case, which had animated the West German press in the 1950s.

36. O'Neill 217.

37. O'Neill 218.

38. Mark Martin Gruettner, *Intertextualität und Zeitkritik in Günter Grass' „Kopfgeburten“ und „Die Rättin“* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 1997) 107.

39. O'Neill 219.

40. Grass 456.

41. Hunt 295.

42. Wolfgang Ignee, "Apokalypse als Ergebnis eines Geschäftsberichts. Günter Grass' Roman *Die Rättin*" *Apokalypse. Weltuntergangsvisionen in der Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Ed. Gunter E. Grimm, Werner Faulstich und Peter Kuon (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1986) 387.

43. Günter Grass quoted in O'Neill 213.

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Alkmene's Identity Crisis

The Realization of the 'Nicht-Ich' in Kleist's Heroine

John A. Woodward

...Ich ist kein Naturprodukt, keine Natur, kein historisches Wesen, sondern ein anarchistisches, eine Kunst, ein Kunstwerk.

Novalis—(Schlegel-Tieckschen Ausgaben)

In the waning days of the eighteenth century, when society itself was poised on the brink of a new historical moment, the birth of a new period in literary and artistic history was being witnessed. The Romantic period consumed all aspects of art, science, philosophy, and literature and subsumed the human ideal, the questioning of human existence in a refreshing, life affirming manner. In this explosion of artistic endeavor and this admixing of art with science, science with philosophy, philosophy with literature, into this amalgam were planted the seeds of ideas of such monumental proportion that they would continue to prosper for decades and centuries to come. For German literature, science and philosophy, this period was artistically, philosophically, and scientifically incredibly fecund. In philosophical circles, Fichte held the first chair dedicated to Critical Philosophy in Germany at Jena (Breazeale 15). In the literary world, Goethe still ruled the stage, but his hands were more often than not supporting the attempts of fresh, youthful, and promising playwrights, as well as philosophers (see *footnote 29*, Breazeale 15). One such playwright was a troubled young man just out of the

Prussian army by the name of Heinrich von Kleist, for whom Goethe did not have much respect, but whose name would become synonymous with the early Romantic German stage. As well, walking through the same artistic streets, though certainly not at the same time, was a young, well-received poet, Novalis, whose ideas on the female role were radical and controversial for the time, and in today's world all but overlooked.

In the following pages I will attempt to draw a connection between the lives, through literature, location, and circulation and interrelation of ideas, of Kleist and Fichte, and consequently, Kleist and Novalis, as well as Novalis' circle of acquaintances called by Strand in her book *I/You* the Jena Circle. This endeavor will lead to an examination of Kleist's *Amphytrion* using the ideas of femininity and female roles postulated by Novalis and his circle, which seem on more than one level applicable to the reading of the character of Alkmene.

Novalis, born Friederich von Hardenburg, was a poet and philosopher in late eighteenth century Weimar. He belonged to a group of intellectuals who were at the very base of the Romantic era Germany. Novalis, Fichte, Schlegel, Schelling, the physicist Johann Ritter, and others, were part of the "Jenenser Romantik," a group that coalesced in the late eighteenth Century around Weimar and the University of Jena, and who were in opposition to the "unphilosophical Berliner Frühromantik." This group represented one of the earliest Romantic movements in Germany, whose influence reached into the philosophical circles of the time as well as the scientific circles (Kohlschmidt 5). It is rumored, in fact, that Hans Christian Oersted, discoverer of electromagnetism, reported before his death that he was very much indebted to Schelling for the discovery. That bit of academic 'gossip' aside, however, the influence of the group is all but undeniable on the various artists and thinkers of the period, and was indeed composed of some of the more renowned of both.

The end of this 'period' was indicated, according to Kohlschmidt, by the death of Heinrich Wilhelm Ferdinand

Wackenroder: "Mit Wackenroders Tod 1797 ging die früheste Phase der deutschen Romantik zu Ende." Kleist, during these years, author of *Amphytrion* (1807), was serving unhappily in the Prussian Army, a post that he would later resign in order to pursue his various careers before turning to that of writer. By 1801, Novalis was dead, but he and his companions of the "Jenenser Romantik" had left an indelible imprint on the face of German literature, drama, science and art in general: "The Jena [Jenenser] Romantics sought to disrupt and transform the idealist thinking of their era, which they felt was constraining subjectivity, enclosing it in the selfsame world" (Strand 1).

Some of the prominent ideas of Novalis will be discussed at more length below, but to introduce another of the players in this period piece: Novalis himself was crucial to the movement described above by Strand, which was in supposed philosophical opposition to the ideas of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, a highly influential German philosopher. Fichte, the spur of Novalis' philosophical endeavors to a certain extent, "saw himself as the heir to Kant," but his contemporaries, and Kant himself, "rejected this claim and treated Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* as an entirely new and original philosophical system" (Breazeale ix). He and Novalis were both coexisting in a politically and culturally tumultuous time in Weimar, which would see Fichte accused of Atheism and sedition, and consequently forced to resign his chair. At the time Novalis was writing poetry and waxing philosophical in the various high-minded, academic arenas of late eighteenth century Weimar, Fichte held the Critical Philosophy chair at the University of Jena, and was hard at work on his most famous, and to some infamous, philosophical creation, *Wissenschaftslehre*; and as Fichte was being lambasted for his supposed beliefs, Novalis was taking his ideas and moderating them for the artistically, religiously, and socially minded.

One of the core notions of Fichte's philosophy was that of the 'I' (*das Ich*). This philosophical concept is based on, or rather inspired by, the Kantian notion, '*das Ding an sich*'. What began as an extension of the philosophy of Kant, soon took off into realms not covered by the philosophical genius, resulting in Kant's divorcing himself from

the project. Of course, given an 'I' in any dialectical system there must be a counterpart, the not-I (*das Nicht-Ich*). "The not-I determines the I... and the I determines itself" (Martin 106). This concept of the 'I' was crucial to Fichte's philosophy: "The Fichtean Ego can only come to consciousness by positing an entity other than itself against which it can define itself.... In this model [Ich and NichtIch], the object world is reduced to being merely that which is *not* the subject. It is fully and totally determined by the subject" (Newman 21). The I was crucial, as well, to the 'responses' from Novalis, who took this terminology as literally perhaps as Kleist's reading of Kant, and turned it to his own ideas, which will be discussed to a greater extent below.

The intent of this academic exercise was all but academic to Fichte at the time. Fichte sought, through his theories, to explain the existence of morality and eventually god himself as being an extension of morality. "The goal of moral striving, according to Fichte's obscure claim, is the unity of the intelligent I and the self-positing I" (Martin 123). This terminology, the "intelligent I" and the "self-positing I" is unique to Fichte, and was coined by him in his attempt to express these rather weighty and admittedly obscure notions: "Insofar as it is self-positing, Fichte claims, the I is thoroughly autonomous, the product of its own immediate self determination. Insofar as it is intelligent... it represents something 'other', something that acts as a constraint on and determinant of the I's representational acts" (Martin 128).

It is at this point of moral cohesion that Novalis enters the equation. And it is at this point that sources seem to differ as to Novalis' and Fichte's intent. Strand alleges that Novalis critiques Fichte's ideas in an unpublished fragment entitled *Fichte-Studien*: "Novalis attempts to criticize Fichte's idealist notion of a self that perceives the world only from its own point of view, is absolutely grounded in itself, sees the other, the Non-I, only as a form of itself, and remains untouched by otherness outside of itself" (Strand 7). The problem one encounters here is either with Strand's reading of Novalis, which must, due to the unavailability of this fragment, remain sacrosanct, or with Novalis' reading of Fichte. As one can see

with Martin's representation of Fichte's ideas on morality above, the notion of morality to Fichte seems to be a conjoining of the I with the Other. Yet this conjoining seems to be precisely what Novalis claims humankind should strive for, in seeming opposition to Fichte. Newmann states Novalis' attempts thus: "Novalis revised Fichte's model by emphasizing the *process* of interaction between subject and object.... But Novalis's object is no longer merely the negation of the subject, a 'NichtIch,' but a subjective entity in its own right, a 'Du'..." (Newmann 21-22). It would seem then that instead of going against Fichte's philosophical expressions, Novalis seeks to expound upon them, whether knowingly or unknowingly, and in the process make them more accessible to the non-philosophical mind. For Novalis, the 'other' (Novalis' term) must exist within the 'I', for "the 'I' does not merely represent itself to itself as self-same. Rather, it imagines itself as other... as a sign of otherness" (Strand 8). If one were to draw further parallels, this notion is also similar to the psychological notion of transference.

This dilemma, though, is perhaps outside the scope of this particular endeavor, for it is the ideas of Novalis, however much they may be a misconstruing of Fichte's work, that are of interest to us here. Novalis' misreading, or rereading, of Fichte could actually be said to parallel, coincidentally a similar step by Kleist, i.e. his "too literal interpretation of Kant..." (Willoughby 78). Through whatever means it originated, however, Novalis took the ideas of Fichte, clarified them, and made them accessible to the artistic realm through which he moved, an artistic realm through which Kleist moved as well. The impact Novalis' ideas may or may not have had was most likely limited due to the lack of dissemination through publication, but that does not mean they were not acted upon by Novalis, and disseminated locally, through conversation and philosophical arguments as well as reflected in his poetry and prose, as asserted by Strand.

At the time Novalis and Fichte were struggling with philosophical questions of being, Kleist was approaching the subject from an artistic perspective. Using the Classical world as inspiration, he presented and discussed pesky philosophical questions of existence,

similar to those of Fichte and Novalis, in *Amphytrion*, a rewriting of Molière's version of the Greek original, which was based on the myth of the birth of Hercules. The prime difference between Kleist's version and that of Molière, as recognized by most scholars, is the representation of the character Alkmene (Greenberg 30). This expansion of the character, an expansion that Greenberg states makes Alkmene occupy "its [the story Jupiter-Alkmene] center with her tender sexual charm and anguished innocence" (ibid.) would seem to be intentional, and hence the character herself must bear some larger 'meaning' for Kleist than for Molière. What this 'meaning' is can partially be defined in terms of her romantic femininity.

Before we look at the text, however, we should attempt to draw some historical connections between Kleist and the Jena Romantics. Kayka has proved that there was some connection, however thin, between Kleist, Novalis and Schlegel (Kayka 87-91). His work is dedicated to separating Kleist critically from the realm of the Romantics, and hence his aim is to distance Kleist through his poetics from that movement; however, he demonstrates a certain thematic linking between the two as follows: "*Dennoch ist es interessant, einige Ähnlichkeiten in ihren [Kleists und Novalis'] Anschauungen zu beobachten...*" (ibid. 89). Kayka also reveals: "*Schlegelsche Einflüsse lassen sich nirgends [in Kleist] nachweisen; doch hat sich Kleist mit den beiden großen Kritikern der "Schule" beschäftigt, weniger mit ihren poetischen Versuchen..., umso mehr mit ihren kritischen Schriften und Aphorismen*" (ibid. 87). This alone points to a connection between Kleist intellectually and Novalis as well as Schlegel. Kayka's point, however, is that they, Novalis and Kleist, seemed to have come upon similar themes, but that they reached them through different paths. Certainly, though, this points to the appearance of a discourse, about which Kleist may very likely have known through his reading of Schlegel, a fellow follower of the Fichtian/Novalian concept of the I, and one that most likely influenced his ability to express these very themes that are brought forward in Novalis. In other words, the paths over which they trod to reach these themes may have been different, but the expression of the end result is very likely based on the philosophical ground of

Fichte and Novalis. What Kayka seeks to set apart we seek to unite. But our reunification of these perhaps disparate others is not driven by the search for a rubric under which to place them, but rather the multifarious quality of romantic ideals and ideas. The character of Alkmene seems informed rather than created by the ideas of Schlegel, Fichte, Novalis, as well as others.

According to Strand, Schlegel suggests, “that the ‘[innerer] *Zweispalt*’ the internal split into self and other in man, the conflict within between the opposing tendencies of the dividing and uniting I, is something that women do not experience” (Strand 96). This is a statement that conflicts with a reading of Alkmene’s plight by Greenberg in his introduction to a translation of five of Kleist’s plays: “The intrusion from above has split her innocent soul.... That is what she is made to know in the last scene of the play, division of the soul” (Greenberg 34). If women did not experience this internal split into self and other, why is Alkmene represented as such, divided, at the end of the play? Could it be Kleist’s view, that women, when subjected to the male structuring view until they are defined by that male-defined relationship, do not have this concept of internal other, yet when the original, defining relationship devolves, they are left not with nothing, but rather with this uniquely, according to Schlegel, male concept?

Alkmene’s words to Charis seem to point to this male structuring view, from which Alkmene may escape in the end:

O Charis! –Eh will ich irren in mir selbst!
 Eh will ich dieses innerste Gefühl,
 Das ich am Mutterbusen eingesogen,
 Und das mir sagt, daß ich Alkmene bin,
 Für einen Parther oder Perser halten.
 –Nimm mir
 Das Aug, so hör ich ihn; das Ohr, ich fühl ihn;
 Mir das Gefühl hinweg, ich atm’ ihn noch;
 Nimm Aug und Ohr, Gefühl mir und Geruch,
 Mir alle Sinn und gönne mir das Herz:
 So läßt du mir die Glocke, die ich brauche,

Aus einer Welt noch find ich ihn heraus.

(II/4, 1156-1167)

Alkmene seems to express with the words, “*das ich am Mutterbusen eingesogen*,” the realization that her identity as woman and as wife, (which may be mutually dependent) is a constructed identity, but one that she cannot physically or psychologically change. She has inherited this identity through her mother, the highest concept of the feminine for Schlegel and Novalis, “sucked it up through her milk” as Greenberg translates. She identifies herself as Alkmene (*ich [bin] Alkmene*) a concept that has come through her mother, but this concept is dependent on her husband, on her abilities as wife and mother, and most importantly the relationships between these social realms. The lines also indicate this ‘romantic’ dependency on her husband, Amphytrion, and more importantly her understanding of him. He could be considered her other, her defining article, and one that she must understand, for she cannot conceive of the internal other of Schlegel.

During the time Kleist was writing *Amphytrion*, Novalis, Schlegel and others were attacking the social situation of woman as slave and raising the question of woman’s place in society. Schlegel’s interpretation of the ideas of identity of Novalis, as inspired by Fichte, has man finding the feminine inside himself as woman the masculine: “They would like to see both men and women break out of the confines of their gendered socialization, freeing rather than restraining themselves. Men and women will become fully human by developing both masculine and feminine traits...” (Strand 75). However, as one can see from the citation from Strand above, Schlegel himself was constantly contradicting his own notions of woman and woman’s existence as possessing the masculine not-I. According to Strand, this conflict between the ideal and the real was constant and prevalent in both Novalis and Schlegel (*ibid.* 95-99).

However inconsistent these ideas were when applied to reality, though, the fact is that, discursively speaking, they were topical to the day, and appear to surface in Alkmene. Let us assume for a moment that the ideas of Novalis apply to humanity and that mankind is

composed of the I and the not-I all under the rubric I which exists in opposition to the Other. According to Novalis above, the not-I, is the I as seen by itself, it is self-knowledge. Alkmene then, again according to Schlegel, would not be able to construct this internal not-I, and would hence be dependent on the other to define her existence. This other for the 18th and 19th century female was predominately the male. Perhaps though, we should approach it from the less than philosophical point of view, for despite his brilliant ability at dialectical writing, critics have repeatedly questioned Kleist's understanding of some of the finer points of philosophical inquiry.

Alkmene is a woman, the loving, doting wife of Amphytrion. Her reality as wife, her social being was well laid out by the writers and social philosophers of the day, as being subservient to the husband, and lightening his existence through co-operation, assistance, support, love, etc. (Frevert 17). Her existence and her self-knowledge, appropriate to the time, seem based on her notion as wife. The Other that exists outside of her identity, yet defines it, is her relationship to her husband, Amphytrion, and his view of her. It is in this relationship that she feels secure and whole: "*Was brauchen wir, als nur uns selbst?*" (I/4, 428). The final cry, the infamous "Ach!" is then her realization of the instability of the other, and the fact that she cannot define herself in the relationship to her other, because this relationship is by its Kantian nature unstable and unknowable. As Greenberg stated, the "Ach!" is the "[splitting] of her innocent soul," a soul whose purity was its singularity, its unity, its eternal agreement in her defining You, Amphytrion. But without this defining You, she is freed from her dependency, and it is the very freedom that causes her soulful cry.

It seems on one level that Kleist may be representing the notions of Schlegel and Novalis in Alkmene's 'freedom', her realization of the other, and her defining of her own soul, yet there is a deeper, satiric quality to the "Ach!" with which he ends the play, that is somehow disturbing. Alkmene and Amphytrion demonstrate that one can never know the truth, never depend on the senses to relate the truth, yet at the same time she is representative of and discovers the fact that she cannot depend on her Other to define her, the

relationship between the two has been shattered. By extension, she represents the fact that woman cannot depend on man to define her; woman must define herself, perhaps by realizing the split, the not-I, to which Schlegel and Novalis refer. Also, the *Zuschauer* is left with the impression that the marriage between Alkmene and Amphytrion, a marriage that at one point defined her existence, will continue. But continue into what? What sort of future does Kleist reveal for the couple, now that Alkmene has achieved her searched-for goal of freedom, of independence from the male-defined identity? Alkmene is left with the child of a god, surely, but also the knowledge that her existence is infirm, indefinable, unreal, and based on a social relationship that is subject to the whim of the gods, or the whim of man in his understanding of the gods.

Jupiter seems to touch on the notion of Alkmene's constructed identity when he says: "*alles / Was sich dir nahet, ist Amphytrion.*" Though this is sophistry on the part of Jupiter, it reflects a philosophical approach to the problem, one that Kleist seems to play upon and subvert. Alkmene is surrounded by Amphytrion, is defined by him and his world. All that she is and sees, and however she is seen is reflected in and on Amphytrion. They are become a single unit, but she is subservient to his 'meaning'.

She does not accept Jupiter's 'rational' explanation, however, and instead demands that he give her a direct, non-philosophical answer. She denies his philosophy, his world of truth subjected to rationality until it is mashed into non-existence. She looks for the truth; a truth that she cannot find in the Amphytrion represented by Jupiter, and hence a truth she cannot know until her "soul is split" and her self-perceived sin separates her from her wife-defined identity. Kleist takes this and reflects this knowledge in her final cry. Her truth is then the realization that her former truth was all but truth, was in fact based on sophistry, on illusion, on social norms and expectations, and it is this truth, that truth is unattainable, that seems to set her free, while all the while, restraining her in itself.

Hans Robert Jauß says of the above quote from Alkmene: "*Die klassische Frage der Identität, die der Mythos vorgab, führt bei Kleist in das Dilemma: Wie kann ich sein, wenn ich meiner selbst am anderen irre*

werden muß? Weder das innerste Gefühl des einsamen Individuums noch ein absolutes Ich als Anfang des Denkens, sondern das <Ich als Subjekt, das nur in Beziehung zu einem andern Subjekt seine volle Existenz erlangt>, steht hier in Frage" (Jauß 132). As Jauß states, it is not the *absolutes Ich* that stands in question, but rather it is the Hegelian I as subject. Certainly it is not her being that is at stake, but it is her self-perceived notion, it is her identity as defined by Amphytrion, an identity that by the end has no more meaning for her, because the existence of a single, pure Amphytrion has been thrown into question. Her very identity is thrown into question by her realization. In a sense, Kleist throws the entire concept of the absolute I on its head, by demonstrating the sophistry involved in the rational exploration of the human existence. Alkmene's plight represents the inability to function in a world of others that may be the same, a world where truth is based on the beliefs, the social expectations of man, and as a concept in and of itself has no real meaning, no real truth. Kleist explores with Alkmene the relationship that Novalis sought to clarify between the I and the You. It is the relationship between Alkmene and Amphytrion for Kleist, this I/You relationship, but it is there nonetheless, presented in its full, social context, as it functions in Kleist's view of reality. And it is this relationship that Kleist turns on his head by pointing out that it is a relationship that means nothing if the You is indefinable, and subject to random change, the 'will of the gods', and is hence unstable, radical, irrational. By presenting these themes in the guise of the classical world, Kleist presents a world to the rational thinkers of his day where irrationality exists and has severe philosophical consequences. It is this irrationality that spurs the crises of identity, of I and You, and hence demonstrates the power of these philosophically outlined relationships as they apply to the 'real' world. Alkmene represents the subversion of these philosophical notions at the same time as she supports them. She causes the viewer to see the relationships between these ideas and the reality that surrounds them, as well as the power of these observations. She is at one and the same time the embodiment of Fichtean/Novalian philosophy, the fulfiller thereof, and the destroyer of them, and it is this dichotomy, this indeterminacy that makes her subject to meaning in the play, a

meaning that casts not aspersions on the philosophical ideas of Kleist's day, but rather fears, the terror one would experience, and Kleist did experience, if they were true.

Though no firm factual connection, historically, can be drawn between Kleist and Novalis, there are perhaps thematic connections between the two. This thematic association has been discussed above. Yet Kayka would continue to insist that this relationship was less than influential to Kleist. It may certainly be true that Kleist did not set out to reply to, or even incorporate Fichtean, or Novalian ideas in his work, but this does not mean that they are not expressed, whether subconsciously or not. This Novalis that Kayka refers to as: "*Hardenburg-Novalis, von dem Du [Kleist] mir nicht sagen wirst, daß Du ihn nicht kennst*" (Kayka 87), was a member of the philosophical world in which Kleist himself dabbled. As Kayka himself admits, Kleist would most certainly have heard of Novalis, however: "*daß Kleist Novalis' Werke mit seiner Schwester zusammen in Königsberg gelesen hat, [sagt das obene Zitat keineswegs aus]*" (ibid.) As such, however, Kleist would most certainly have come in contact if not with the ideas of Novalis, than most certainly with those of Fichte, bearer of the Kantian rationalist name. The banishment of Fichte from his chair at Jena, would also have caused a stir in the entirety of the German philosophical world, hence Kleist would have at the very least known of his then controversial ideas. As such it would seem had Kleist been at all involved in the philosophical world of the day, had he even been involved in the topical world, then he would have heard of and perhaps become familiar with the notions of Fichte and through him, or possibly through a search for clarification on the topic, with Novalis.

This is of course merely conjecture. It is entirely possible that Kleist never did directly, physically pick up a book by Novalis, or examine his ideas of *das Ich*, but when one considers that these topics were part of the philosophical and, through Novalis, poetical discourses of the day, the seed of these notions was bound to have reached Kleist in some form or other. The rational discourse created

by Kant, which Kleist followed, was itself creator of discourses; spinning off like eddies in a pond, creating and dismantling randomly, informing the notions of Fichte, and informing the thought and thinkers of the time. This discourse saturated and was saturated by the discourses of eighteenth and nineteenth century Germany and became an integral part of the German psyche. As Kleist as artist and would-be philosopher moved through these eddies, and interacted with his period on a social and intellectual level, it is inevitable that he would feel an imprint, however slight, from these discourses, even if he did not directly interact with them. It seems then that Kleist's relationship to it, to this rational discourse, was what informed his (re)creation of *Amphytrion*.

On a certain level, too, is Alkmene's plight a reflection of Kleist's own. She comes to realize the indefinite nature of reality, much like Kleist after his Kant experience, and is blasted by it. Her reality is a realization of the philosophical ideal of Fichte and Novalis, an ideal that has woman opposed to man, not wrapped up in the selfsame unit with him. She sees herself as well opposed to a man, an other, a You, that is not constant and inviolable, but that is subject to radical change, and as such unfathomable, and it is this relationship, coupled with her lack of internal other, that "splits her soul," and frees her into a truth-less, formless world of rationality and infirm others.

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Book Reviews

Derek Bickerton and William H. Calvin. *Lingua Ex Machina.* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.)

Reviewed by Kryztof Urban

Introduction

In this jointly written publication, the two authors attempt to answer one of the most fascinating aspects of language: its origin and development from a simple protolanguage. Rather than improving existing ideas, the writers goal is invention; in their own words,

We're not trying to write the book about language origins, one that covers the landscape of interesting ideas that float around at conferences on language origin. We'll be happy just to show several powerful ways of getting from ape behaviors to syntax without relying on the usefulness of communication per se.

(7)

Uncovering the origin of language is not only an interesting undertaking, but moreover a daunting one. Fortunately, the authors (Bickerton a linguist in the generative tradition with a number of publications on language origin, Calvin a neuroscientist especially interested in the brain, thought, and language) are among the finest representatives of their fields.

This publication is intended for the typical serious reader, but not necessarily in the sciences. Its unusual structure contributes to a very

pleasant reading experience. Starting at the Villa Serbelloni in Ballagio, Italy, the authors communicate to each other in the form of letters and notes. Thus, when Bickerton explains the nature of words in the first chapter, the text is interrupted by drawings and remarks by Calvin, and vice versa. The appendix contains a concise introduction to Chomsky's "minimalist program" as well as a glossary of linguistic and neuroscientific terms.

Summary

At the beginning of language there were separate words. Words are described as a combination of mental representations. In the brain they are represented as sensory impressions linked to particular senses.

The authors argue that protolanguage utterances predominately consisted of separate nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives (the latter, however, only having a general meaning). Each word was equally important; consequently, there were no phrases or clauses in the protolanguage, or any other syntactic structure. Compare this to our modern, full-fledged syntactic language: it contains more word forms which build hierarchical phrase and clause structures. The words in modern languages are not equally important. For example, in a noun phrase, the noun is more important than its modifier. (Bickerton compares the words in protolanguage to a foot race, while modern words resemble a team sport)

How did language develop its highly complicated structure? According to Bickerton, the evolution progressed without any obvious intermediate states between protolanguage and "true" language. He argues that the protolanguage was sufficient enough to guarantee the survival of the *Homo habilis* and *Homo erectus*. Syntactic structure emerged as a by-product of altruistic behavior. In order to maximize the chance of survival, Bickerton argues, our ancestors had to learn social behavior.

Altruism requires an abstract concept of social interaction. In the book we find the example of two individuals negotiating the terms of a relationship from which both could profit, like for example "If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." Such thinking required an abstract concept of social roles. Bickerton argues that they were represented as thematic roles (for example, GOAL, AGENT, or THEME).

In a next step, the thematic roles became detached from their altruistic meaning. Instead, they were used to provide language with its typical ordered structure. Thematic roles became abstract linguistic phenomena:

It didn't have to go on being important once the function of those roles diverged, once they were exapted to play a part in language. The really important thing is that those key roles had to be expressed in sentences. (136)

For example, imagine an early *Homo sapiens* who wanted to express his lust for some particular food. Contextual information would allow him to say "I take", while being perfectly understood by bystanders. However, "taking" involves two thematic roles. Their usage was obligatory, since the roles were mapped onto the syntactic system from real social interaction. As a consequence, our ancestor had to utter "I take meat."

In a similar fashion, language evolved into more and more complex structures. According to Bickerton, the resulting syntactic system resembles the lexicon and phrase structures of the Minimalist Program.

Calvin contributes to the syntactic development by suggesting an internal evolutionary process that selects the fittest sentence out of a variety of possible utterances. In his own words,

The cortical entrainment circuitry is how you get started with a Darwinian process in the cortex, operating on the time scale of thought and action, shaping up perceptions, and actions plans into higher and higher quality. (82-3)

Calvin compares the brain activity needed to produce a sentence with that of throwing a stone and suggests that many of the language related circuits are utilized for both purposes.

The book ends with a summary of the suggested theories and Bickerton's conclusion that at last Darwinian and Chomskian ideas were united under the proposed framework.

Criticism

The following thoughts concentrate on the linguistic content of the book. Due to my deficiencies in neuroscience, I could not possibly attempt to evaluate Calvin's theories. Instead, I would like to refer to Philip Lieberman's evaluation of Calvin's ideas in his book *Human Language and the Reptilian Brain* (Harvard: 2000).

According to Bickerton, our sophisticated language system developed only with the rise of syntax. Language, then, evolved not merely because of its communicative function. This accounts for the fact that language and the hominid call system of other species (and those of our ancestors) are not directly related. As Bickerton points out,

The amazing thing is that some people still believe that language must have developed out of some kind of hominid call system. (21)

Instead, Bickerton suggests a non-communicational motivation for the emergence of syntax:

For what I'm proposing here is that the practice of reciprocal altruism created the set of abstract

categories and structures that, once they were joined to a structureless protolanguage, yielded the kind of syntax that all modern human languages exhibit. (126)

Why does Bickerton assume a non-communicational, non-functional cause for syntax? The answer to this question lies in the underlying syntactic theory, the generative Minimalist Program. Like all its generative predecessors, the Minimalist Program derives sentences through usage of a lexicon, argument structure, non-meaningful properties of the verb like attachment, and thematic roles. This theory denies the idea of language as reflecting in its structure the fact that it is a tool of communication used by humans.

In order to conform to the generative theory of language, Bickerton tries to establish syntax as a non-meaningful set of rules. This comes, however, at a cost. First, Bickerton himself acknowledges that even protolanguage did have some rudimentary structure:

Indeed, whenever we find an example of protolanguage whether it be child speech, pidgin, or an ape's attempts at language, we find that it consists of nouns and verbs without modifiers of any kind (except for very occasional common adverbs or adjectives, often incorporated into a single, rote-learned phrase). (32)

In other words, there was meaningful structure in language before the emergence of altruism. And it is indeed plausible to assume that language developed from some hominid call system, adding complexity and abstraction to its structure to better serve the purpose of communicating information. Such an improvement in small steps is at least as plausible as and conforms better to evolutionary theory than Bickerton's assumptions.

A second point of criticism concerns the relation between semantics and syntax. Bickerton himself acknowledges that syntax emerged from semantics:

Before there was syntax, there was only semantics. So, if you are looking for the very first stages in the development of syntax, you have to look in semantics for whatever is the most syntaxlike thing. Argument structure is the most plausible candidate. (50)

We are to conclude that the emergence of syntax was the result of two steps. First, the meaningful and non-linguistic argument structures, such as GOAL or AGENT, are used to establish order in language use. Once the order is translated into innate fixed rules and the lexicon, the units become meaningless (for example, the verb "eat" takes two arguments, but the usage of the word is no longer based on the meaning of the arguments). In addition to these two steps, a hearer's task is to re-attach meaning to the arguments; however, this time the semantics come from a different source, say, the lexicon or some predicate logic.

While such a development is possible, it seems not very likely. In fact, one arrives at a much more elegant explanation by stating that syntax and grammar are actually semantic phenomena. To extend the above example, "eat" does not take two arguments because the lexicon says so, but rather because it has a meaning which often involves someone who is eating and something that is being eaten.

However, a semantic explanation of syntax is incompatible with the Minimalist Program. As a result, Bickerton states that syntax was derived from semantics, but he fails to entertain the idea that everything that is syntax still is in the domain of semantics.

Finally, I would like to ask the question whether the book fulfilled its promise to show that, in the authors' words,

the approaches pioneered by Darwin and Chomsky
are fully reconcilable (195).

As mentioned above, the book is structured in a way that both authors independently present their material, with both Bickerton and Calvin adding comments and figures to each other's chapters.

A closer look reveals that in fact their theories and assumptions match in some areas, but are incompatible in the most vital aspects of the book. Take the example of sentence production. As in earlier publications, Calvin entertains the idea of a "Darwin Machine". As mentioned above, this idea suggests that evolutionary processes determine the events in our brain. Calvin claims that language usage is based on such a process:

But might the Darwin Machine also support—or even explain—syntax, that great aid to structured thoughts of length and subtlety? The notion of competing solutions tends to orient you toward explanations that will allow an entire candidate sentence, complete with embedded phrases and clauses, to be compared against another complete candidate, with all its own phrases and clauses also in place. Yes, you may earlier have one phrase competing against an alternative phrase, but you also have to have a way of judging a complete sentence for its quality relative to another candidate sentence. You also need to judge the winner against internalized standards for solutions "good enough" so that you can finish, moving on to something else. (155)

If we assume for the moment that indeed our language is the product of a Darwin Machine, which would be the "way of judging" whether a sentence is sufficient? One would assume that a sentence is sufficient if it fulfills the communicative need of the speaker. In other words, the Darwin Machine is a device to utilize language as a means of communication.

Calvin's explanation reveals that his standpoint is irreconcilable with any version of generative theory. For one, language is not regarded as a tool for communication. Moreover, the Darwin Machine does not follow a number of well-defined rules to map a certain argument structure to a higher hierarchy (i.e., the final sentence). Indeed, the whole idea of the Machine is that its flexibility is derived from

evolutionary processes based on chance. But compare this concept with Bickerton's description of the Minimalist Program, in which

Attachment, of its nature, is a serial, cumulative process, and the moves that compose it must follow a definite order. (225)

The Minimalist Program is not based on probability, the Darwin Machine is. Calvin's concept suggests a different linguistic theory, one in which language is a tool of communication and evolved as such; one in which both lexical and syntactic signs bear a semantic meaning; one in which grammaticality is not a necessity, but signals a relatively probable solution to communicate a message.

It is interesting to point out why this conflict is not apparent throughout the book. The reason is that Calvin almost never talks about the actual linguistic theory that Bickerton promotes. Indeed, an introduction to the Minimalist Program is given only mentioned in the appendix. In addition, Bickerton uses neuroscientific evidence for the representation of words, but never picks up the idea of a Darwin Machine.

Final remark

I would like to quote the following paragraph from the chapter "Darwin and Chomsky Together at Last":

For four decades, the study of our species and its unique capacities has been delayed and disrupted by a controversy that should never have come about. The evidence that all species, including our own, developed through natural selection operating on genetic variation is so overwhelming, one might think that only those driven by some ideological agenda could fail to accept it. (195)

The history of linguistics, too, can be regarded as an evolutionary process. In 1957, generative grammar entered the linguistic stage and dominated the field for the next decades. However, more than forty years of sophisticated (and well funded) research did not lead to a concise and powerful theory of language. Since the mid-80s, NLP and AI scientists turned towards statistical methods and pattern recognition theory to solve language related problems.

In recent years, many linguists predicted a growing influence of biological theory in the linguistic field. "Lingua Ex Machina" is an attempt to bring together evolutionary theory and the Minimalist Program. In my opinion, the generative theory did not pass the fitness test.

Images of Germany: Perceptions and Conceptions. (New York: Lang, 2000)

Reviewed by Christina J. Wegel

The comforting notion of some conferences lies in the fact that one might not be obliged to attend all talks. The comforting fact about collections of articles from these same conferences holds that one may read them at one's own pace and comfort.

I recall driving up north to Montreal, Canada, for the conference "Images of Germany. Perceptions and Conceptions" held by the Department of German Studies at McGill University, September 18-20, 1997. Back then I skipped a few talks due to the fact that time did not permit attending the entire conference, and I am now pleased to have the opportunity to read the published papers of those presentations missed. It should be noted, however, that I did not reread two articles in this volume whose substance I had already questioned in 1997. Yet, I am still impressed by the quality of the contributions which I (re-)read. Naturally, the level of expertise and in-depth knowledge of each contributor might not diminish the reader's response of feeling differently about various cultural and personal subjects that seem difficult to look at objectively. Because, after all, images of Germany are not just conceptions but perceptions as is suggested in the subtitle of the collection of essays. Thus, it is even more appreciated that the editors Peter M. Daly, Hans Walter Frischkopf, Trudis E. Goldsmith-Reber, and Horst Richter presented as many categories in the book as had already been presented at the conference. The categories stretch from "Inner-German Views" subdivided into three subcategories "Official Perspectives," "As Expressed in Literature, Film and Culture," and East German Images of West Germany" over "Views of Immigrants to Germany" and "Views from North America" to "European Images of Germany."

It would be a rather tedious and too lengthy undertaking for a book review to summarize every single entry. However, let me point

to a few articles I found most enjoyable, interesting, and informative. Peter M. Daly's "Introduction" provides a concise and precise overview of all articles printed in Volume Three in the McGill European Studies series. The first article to which I am pointing can be found in the first subcategory of "Inner-German Views: Official Perspectives." Margarete L. Meyers (Indiana University South Bend) shows in her essay "Propaganda at the Post Office: Competing Visions of Germany in the Postage Stamps of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, 1949-1959" the division of East and West Germany during their first 10 years reflected in the designs of postage stamps. She analyzes postage stamps with various political and cultural commentary such as a stamp highlighting the conflict surrounding the Oder-Neisse border or the less explosive stamp commemorating Friedrich Schumann's death 200 years earlier in a Germany that was not even yet. Meyers points out that this essentially corresponding cultural heritage which was once used to underline the differences in political and social beliefs of the two Germanys could now be employed as "common elements [to] form the basis of a shared heritage upon which the people of today's united Germany can draw." (43) This is certainly a hope much welcomed not only in Germany.

In the section "Views from North America," Dieter Dettke, the director of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Washington, D.C., in his article "Germany's Image in America: A Friendship with Undercurrents," makes us aware of the thin line the German-American friendship is so often forced to walk. Dettke underlines the fact that one of the most stable NATO partners of the United States was once its most violent foe in World War II and that the psychological strains this still holds influence the two countries relations. Dettke concludes by emphasizing that "the debate about the "American model" in Europe—perceived both as worthy of emulation and as a rather unattractive future—and the discourse about the "German model" in the United States with the suggestion that it is an idea from the past indicate a potential rift and a lack of commonality in thinking. Much of the controversy is, of course, due to shrill rhetoric. On the other hand, not every public controversy

automatically has to end in harmony." (169) Simply recalling Chancellor Schröder's last visit to sitting president Bush pointed in the directions of a lack of commonality in thinking even if it mostly referred to ecological disagreements. However, one of my language students last quarter showed me a paper he had written for a political science class that was designed as a memorandum to Chancellor Schröder about what's wrong with *Modell Deutschland*.

Last, but not least, Lothar Baier's very personal account of "Images of Germany in France and in Québec" was a truly refreshing read because it was profoundly personal and un-academic in nature. He recalls that francophone Quebecois display a greater tolerance towards foreigners who do not speak French perfectly well and are hence sometimes searching for the right expression. Baier believes this sets them apart from the French, and hence this "combination of fascination and distance, which I have observed in the outlook of Quebecois on France, reminds me of the well-known ambiguities of German views of France. It is the French tradition of formality and distance, which attracts Germans and Quebecois and displeases them at the same time." (214) It seems then that it should really be recommended to every pupil to learn French in Quebec rather than in France even if the French teacher could not approve of this idea any less. But then again, English teachers still mostly pull their hair out when they hear "American English" rather than the good ol' other accent!

The entire collection of essays on perceptions and conceptions of Germany is rounded up nicely by a name index which is indeed much appreciated and would be even more so in the future if it were to turn into a more elaborate, i.e. comprehensive index. I hope that the Department of German Studies at McGill University will continue to hold their conferences on Germany and publish a collection of the talks given.

Karen Duve. *Regenroman*. (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1999.)

Reviewed by Eric Blanckenship

Karen Duve's satirical novel about a writer and wife's idyllic move from Hamburg and the subsequent deconstruction of their relationship has taken the one-time cab driver to the heights of contemporary German literature among young authors. Born in 1961, Duve has also penned *Im tiefen Schnee ein stilles Heim* (1995), a short story, *Der Comic Bruno Orso fliegt ins Weltall* (1997), a collaboration with Judith Zaugg, *Das Lexikon berühmter Tiere* (1997) with Thies Völker, *Das Lexikon berühmter Pflanzen* (1999) also with Völker, *Keine Ahnung* (1999), a collection of short stories, and *Der Fluchtversuch* (1999), a story serialized in *Die Zeit*. Also published in 1999, *Regenroman* has brought much attention to the Hamburg resident, who in an interview with *Der Spiegel*, claimed that "Sexualität, besonders ihr dämonischer Teil, wird in meinen Büchern immer ein zentraler Punkt bleiben."¹ In addition to the sexual, the novel contains layers of literary symbolism ranging from the absurd and grotesque to the religious and political.

Duve criticizes both the traditional patriarchal aspects of society and extreme elements of feminism. She tells this sarcasm-laced story of one woman's awakening self-determination with detached sentiment and poignant observation and develops the important figures as caricatures representing stereotypical extremes in this modern-day battle of the sexes. In addition, she immerses the battlefield in some form of moisture, usually rain, which continues as the difficulties gestate until ultimately a new woman emerges while the other characters are left behind, like the biblical flood. Duve herself calls *Regenroman* "die nasseste Geschichte seit der Sintflut."²

The author uses the figure of Martina to criticize modern perceptions of the ideal woman. Martina is a gorgeous woman and knows it. She takes advantage of this superficial quality when dealing

with men, like the young mechanic who readily jumps to the rescue of a beautiful damsel in distress. However, she finds her identity in this beauty and unconsciously becomes bulimic in order to retain it. Similarly, she maintains an unhealthy relationship with her parents, particularly her father. The problem stems from a sexual experience in her early teens; her father witnessed the act and Martina permanently fell from his grace. Interestingly, the boy, Thomas Marx, whom she was with, states that she was the easiest. This seemingly insignificant comment actually represents a strong statement about the great gender difference in the expectations of sexuality. The boy has no concern or awareness for his involvement, but displays surprise at her willingness. The father re-enforces the difference by dismissing the boy in anger but finding fault with Martina and never respecting her thereafter, always answering her requests with the same phrase: "Nur zu. Mach ruhig weiter so." The irony lies in his treatment of her as an object based upon her sexual behavior and she then becomes a sex object superficially built (consciously and subconsciously) for the pleasure of men.

Another criticism of the modern perception of women can be found in Martina's name. She was born Roswitha, but Leon renamed her Martina because he did not like her birth name. This again exemplifies how a man defines her identity. As Duve unfolds the figure of Martina, it is quite clear that Martina suffers psychologically and emotionally from the lack of understanding of her identity of a woman. As a result, Martina's development involves breaking down many psychological barriers.

Martina ultimately frees herself from these mental bindings. She burns the old yellow car, in which her father caught her with Thomas Marx, as a symbolic gesture of sexual freedom and for liberation from her father's psychological impact. Prior to that, she learned to become more independent from Kay, the woman next-door who essentially adopts a traditionally masculine role; but, more importantly, she gains the confidence that she can survive independently. However, she had to endure a brutal rape to shock her into a truthful awareness of her position in this environment and to realize that she must leave everything behind, as in the biblical flood.

Duve's primary male figure, Leon Ulbricht, changes drastically as Martina becomes increasingly independent. Leon begins as a writer who catches a break; he agrees to write a biography of Benno Pfitzner for a large sum of money. Pfitzner, the brutal big man among men, give him a Mercedes and Leon buys a house near a swamp in former East Germany, thus fulfilling a typical male responsibility: providing for his family. Duve criticizes this traditional responsibility. At Leon and Martina's wedding dinner, Martina's father storms out after verbally abusing Leon for not being equipped to provide for Martina. The episode again exemplifies the determination of Martina's identity by men; as such, she is an object, like property, being passed from one man to another. However, Martina develops a new female identity independent of men's definitions, Leon correspondingly loses his male identity. Interestingly, Duve symbolizes the demise of Leon's identity by caricaturing his declining physical, thus superficial, attributes; he develops a chronic back problem that incapacitates him, and he becomes fat. Leon's deconstruction involves the figure of Pfitzner as well.

Pfitzner's actions caricature the extreme male chauvinist; he is a pimp and a boxer, wealthy and powerful. He gets his way by intimidation and if he does not get what he wants, the results are brutally violent. As a pimp, his perception of women is clear: they are objects to be used, bought, sold, and thrown away when they are no longer needed. He is at the top of the patriarchy and knows his position. He gives orders to everyone. Leon must write his biography the way that he wants it. Harry, Leon's supposed best friend, must rape Martina; he ordered it. Pfitzner's super-masculine identity is simply a logical, albeit extreme extension of Leon's self-identity, which relies greatly upon his ability to define Martina's self-identity as a woman. Pfitzner wants to define not only women, but also everyone and everything. In his self-absorption, he wants to force people to recognize his authority. Duve cleverly draws a connection between Pfitzner and Leon by involving another male figure, Harry Klammt.

Harry represents a masculine figure just like Leon, with one critical exception: he does not make mistakes in the patriarchal

hierarchy. He does not question Pfitzner; he simply does what Pfitzner wants. Conversely, Leon contradicts Pfitzner's will and pays dearly for it. The violent clashes between Pfitzner and Leon revolve around the changes that Pfitzner wants in his biography. These revisions further exemplify his position atop the patriarchy. Contrarily, Harry is an extension of Pfitzner by his obedience to him and this gives him a certain self-righteousness. Because of this, he murders his bullterrier by drowning it in a river; it would have been a mistake not to. Duve emphasizes the enormous flaw in Harry and by extension masculinity and machismo. He is the one who is most dangerous to Martina, not the powerful Pfitzner, because he can arrogantly and ruthlessly carry out orders; to him, Martina is just an object. This event established a connection between the three men. Duve's criticism is poignant: in a woman's self-identity as it relates to men, what is the difference between Leon, Harry, and Pfitzner?

Duve's critical observations do not stop with men. She also caricatures the female characters. Sarcasm and irony fill the events that determine Martina's development and, although she becomes a "new" woman, no mention is made about what a "new" woman is, only what she is not. However, Martina's flaws pale in comparison to the bewitching Schlei sisters, Kay and Isadora. Kay represents the ultra-feminist. Isadora is contrasted with Kay. She is extremely sexual and much more closely related to nature; she lives in a dangerous bog and passes through it effervescently, always carried or protected by fog and mist. Additionally, she simply has some bewitching power over Leon. Leon feels drawn to Isadora, who does not feel the slightest inclination towards the masculine Kay. Even in Leon's advanced state of apathy and self-destruction, Isadora continues to kindle something inside of him, his self-identity as a man.

Isadora uses Leon for her own sexual gratification and he cannot resist her even though he finds her grotesquely ugly. The implication is not that men cannot resist having sex, but rather that men cannot resist what they perceive as feminine. Duve emphasizes this by portraying the masculine Kay as physically attractive and Isadora as physically unattractive.

Isadora also manifest the ideology that Pfitzner has of women, but with one important difference: she controls her sexuality independent of men. Nevertheless, this representation by Duve criticizes women like Isadora for although sexually free, she behaves in a way that manipulates a man's self-identity at the expense of woman's self-identity, i.e. sexual independence is not the only essential element in a woman's self-identity. Duve highlights this by showing Isadora's dependence on the masculinity of her sister, Kay.

Kay embodies the masculine nature. She appears to be the ultimate champion of radical feminism, but she actually is no different than the male figures. She proves this in the end by murdering Pfitzner and Harry with a flame-thrower in defense of the helpless damsel in distress, Martina, to whom she is attracted. The fire symbolism starkly contrasts with the dominant water symbolism throughout the story and seems to signify Kay's over masculine nature, and thus, Duve's rejection of this type of feminism. Her characterization of Kay is typically ironic, Kay simply occupies yet another father figure position in Martina's life and in relating to her, she acts as masculine as any of the male figure in the story. The two Schlei sisters represent the extremes of feminism and their limitations in Duve's story.

Duve also warns that feminism should not come from men. The character of Kerbel serves this purpose. He is a man that dresses in women's clothing and might be a murderer. The implication is clear: beware of the man who defines a woman's identity. That is exactly the problem.

Kerbel also represents much of the political system of the story. Duve uses this character to establish a relationship between the perception of women and the perception of former East Germans. He comments that only he and the women remained in former East Germany after the reunification also remarks that the West Germans bring more money with them when they come to the East. The statements point to the importance of materialism in the relationship between East and West Germany, perhaps drawing a parallel to the development of the relationship between East and West Germany and the relationship between men and women.

The final character of interest is Noah, the dog. Martina develops a close attachment to the dog, which often interferes in her relationship with Leon. This is particularly interesting given the dog's name, Noah, the name of the man who survived the flood, i.e. God's Chosen One. The various manifestations of moisture (rain, fog, mist, overcast) could be interpreted as a reference to the flood. However, Noah also does not survive; he too returns to the swamp. This may indicate a rejection of Christianity as essential to women's ability to free themselves of patriarchal society.

Although candid, brutal events and grotesque, absurd figures fill the story, the gloomy, dreary weather and setting is misleading. In *Regenroman*, the presence of so much water serves two purposes: it casts an air of despair about the situation, and it symbolically shows that Duve believes now is fertile time for the growth and development of women, a symbolic birth exiting the patriarchy. Duve's ability to weave these layers of symbolic meaning and tell an interesting in a sarcastic and detached tone makes this book both thought provoking and enjoyable to experience.

Notes

1. Volker Hage and Mathias Schreiber, "Ich stehe im Regen." *Der Spiegel* 41 (1999):11 October 1999

<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/0,1518,50310,00.html>

2. "Buchtipps." *Zwischen Rhein und Weser*. WDR 2. 19 March 1999

<http://www.wdr.de/radio/wdr2/rheinweser/19990319.html>

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